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Faith, identity, status and schooling:
An ethnography of educational decision-making in northern Senegal

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Submitted for Doctor of Philosophy in Social Anthropology

University of Sussex

January 2016

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

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THESIS SUBMITTED FOR DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ANTHROPOLOGY

FAITH, IDENTITY, STATUS AND SCHOOLING: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF
EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING IN NORTHERN SENEGAL

SUMMARY

This thesis investigates how families in northern Senegal negotiate between state and Islamic schools. Studies of education strategies within anthropology of education predominantly employ Bourdieu's concept of capital. These studies are useful for illuminating the role of education within people's strategies of social mobility, but tend to render invisible preferences based on non-material considerations like spiritual benefits. To overcome this challenge, this thesis uses economic theory which acknowledges both intrinsic and material factors informing school choice. It draws on fifteen months' ethnographic fieldwork comprising life histories, informal interviews and participant observation.

The thesis contributes to several debates in anthropology of development and education. Findings reveal the importance of a caste-like social hierarchy in shaping education strategies, and challenge simplistic predictions common in development discourse about how gender or being Muslim influence educational trajectories. Results also show how education preferences reflect context-specific routes to social mobility. In northern Senegal, lack of formal sector employment makes the secular state school's promises of economic advancement largely inaccessible. Qur'anic schools present a more certain investment for men of privileged social groups who monopolise access to this education, for the prestige of Islamic knowledge and insertion into trade and migration networks. Intrinsic benefits of Qur'anic schooling, like blessing and moral education, also inform school preference. These factors are neglected in development discourse and state education provision - including recent reforms to engage Islamic knowledge to meet Education For All and the Millennium Development Goal - due to secularist and rationalist biases. This undermines families' access to affordable schooling that combines the intrinsic and material benefits which they prioritise, and privileges those who can afford private alternatives. Inspired by applied anthropology committed to social justice, this thesis draws on people's strategies to overcome these challenges to recommend non-formal alternatives to enable education provision compatible with popular worldviews.

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Note on transcription and orthography

The first formal attempt to designate a standardised writing system for Pulaar in the Latin alphabet based on specificities of the vernacular occurred at a UNESCO conference in Bamako in 1966. The norms adopted in this thesis follow the conventions of the Bamako system, including changes made to represent implosive consonants specific to Pulaar as *ɓ* and *ɗ*, and the nasal ‘ny’ sound as *ñ*. Short vowels are transcribed as single vowels – a, e, i, o, u. Long vowels are transcribed by a doubling of the letter. With the exception of the letter ‘c’ pronounced as in ‘church’, consonants are pronounced as in English.

The orthography of place names in Senegal is complex as they vary according to author, historical period in which they were recorded, and spelling conventions used (French, English, recent standardised systems for Pulaar). I have tried to use the most common forms of spelling to avoid confusion. Similarly, names of persons can be transcribed in diverse ways. My informants generally spelled their own names according to French orthography which has become widespread due to state procedures such as birth certificates and identity cards. While all informants’ names are rendered using pseudonyms, I use the French orthography for these names as it is these versions my informants would be most familiar with.

To transcribe Arabic words, names and honorific titles, many of which have been loaned into Pulaar and French in Senegal, I have followed a simplified system omitting diacritical marks with the exception of the ayn (‘) and hamza (‘). I have employed the most common and simplified transcriptions for places and people’s names used in English language publications and standard bibliographic reference texts. I have used the common anglicised construction of plurals using an ‘s’, for instance *tariqas* for the plural of *tariqa* or Sufi order, as opposed to the correct Arabic but less familiar *turuq*.

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Chapter 1. Educational decision-making and development: Understanding a paradox

1.1 “Only poor people attend Qur’anic schools”: Assumptions about school choice in Senegal

In 2010, I travelled to Senegal to undertake a pilot study to prepare a PhD proposal. I wanted to compare official development discourses on the value of sending girls to school, with the perceptions of parents and girls themselves which I felt were neglected in these debates. When I started talking with development practitioners I met in the capital Dakar, they universally considered state schooling to be beneficial and empowering for girls. For them, anything short of 100% female enrolment in primary - if not at higher levels - was a problem to be solved. Policy includes widespread support for the promotion of state schooling for the goal of girls’ empowerment. For instance, the reference document of the Senegalese government’s Coordinating Framework for Interventions on Girls’ Schooling (CCIEF)¹ states: “girls’ education remains the principal motor for human development” as in theory it reduces their vulnerability, favours their participation in decision-making, contributes to diffusion of innovative behaviour, reduces poverty, promotes gender equality, reduces female fertility, and increases uptake of antenatal services and awareness of HIV/AIDS (CCIEF 2011, pp.14–16). Such proclamations are, of course, repeated widely in national and international policy frameworks.

For many development agents I spoke with, a perceived advantage of secular state schools was their potential to overcome social barriers to girls’ empowerment including ‘patriarchal Islamic or cultural values’. This is an important issue given that Senegal’s population of roughly 13.5 million is 94% Muslim (CIA 2013). The notion that secular state schools should be promoted as empowering for girls, including as an antidote to ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ which is supposedly oppressive, also appears in grey literature. Griffiths (2011) cites a UNDP report on women in Senegal, *Les Sénégalaises en Chiffres* (Sow et al. 2000), which argues that socialisation of gender roles, based on pre-Islamic customs and local interpretations of Islam, places all domestic responsibilities on girls and frames their self-worth as being through marriage and motherhood, notions

¹ In French: *Cadre de Coordination des Interventions sur l’Education des Filles*.

whose practical implications limit girls' achievement in state schools. In the report, the secular state school is by contrast "presented as key to breaking the cycle of [gendered] disadvantage" (Griffiths 2011, p.204).

To investigate competing attitudes towards girls' schooling between development agents and communities who adhere to these 'religious and cultural values', I had planned to conduct my doctoral fieldwork in an area of Senegal where female enrolment was relatively low but on the rise, where NGOs and community associations were actively advocating in its favour. It was therefore by chance that I travelled to a village named Medina Diallobé² in the region of St Louis in the north of Senegal. This region does not have the lowest female enrolment in the country, and I made the trip on a whim having recently made a friend from the village. In Medina Diallobé I had the opportunity of staying with a prestigious family of the Pulaar-speaking Haalpulaar ethnic group, whose male members were renowned Muslim clerics.³ My host family followed relatively strict local norms of piety, as the compound was segregated by gender and the women always wore headscarves and long-sleeved dresses when outside the home. The village was considered a hub of Islamic scholarship throughout the region, and the clerics exerted significant authority and influence over social life.

Based on the information I had received in Dakar I assumed that, given the strong Islamic culture in Medina Diallobé, female state school enrolment would be low as parents would either not send their daughters to school at all, or prefer to educate them in Islamic schools. This was a reasonable assumption to make as similar patterns of parental decision-making have been observed in neighbouring contexts. In Mali (Tolo 1991 cited in Brenner, 2000: 234) and Niger (Meunier 1995, p.624) parents who sent their girls to Islamic schools did so hoping that they would learn the basic requirements of the religion to be good wives. Indeed, recent Senegalese education policy has involved construction of Islamic schools which teach religion alongside secular subjects

² A pseudonym.

³ The term used most often in Francophone academic scholarship, and among people in Senegal, for a Muslim teacher, practitioner or Sufi leader is *marabout*. This is a French version of the Arabic term *murabit* meaning a man of religion. However, Seeseman (2011, pp.12–13) warns against academic use of the term *marabout* given its derogatory connotations inherited from the colonial period and implication of clerics as fraudulent and self-interested. Although my informants used the term *marabout*, and I use their words when citing them directly, I employ the more neutral 'cleric' throughout this thesis. In later chapters on dynamics in Medina Diallobé I also use the Pulaar term *ceerno*, meaning a teacher of the Qur'an or Islamic sciences.

in French and Arabic, in “zones of resistance” to state schools, in order to increase female enrolment (CCIEF 2011, p.17). I was therefore surprised to discover that all the adolescent girls in my host family, and indeed, most in Medina Diallobé, attended local primary if not lower secondary (*collège*) and upper secondary (*lycée*) state schools. Some were even at university in Dakar. It was boys and young men in my host family who were less likely to attend state schools, preferring to completely memorise the Qur’an in Qur’anic schools, locally called *daaras*.⁴

These observations were greeted with surprise when I discussed them with development practitioners in Dakar. It was not the high rates of boys attending *daaras* which appeared unusual. Indeed, many Senegalese education policies and reports acknowledge that in areas of the country with strong commitment to Islamic education, male enrolment in primary school can be lower than that of girls (CCIEF 2011, p.19). Rather, it was the high rates of female secondary school enrolment in this strongly Islamic context which came as a surprise. Intrigued by the combined commitment to state and Islamic education among families in Medina Diallobé, and the apparent reversal of a common gender trend in which Muslim parents prefer Islamic over secular schools for girls, I shifted focus to make decision-making in this community the central question of my PhD.

Another aspect of the Medina Diallobé context which contradicted the assumptions of development actors and in policy literature was with regard to constructions of ‘quality’ education with respect to *daaras*. Whenever I mentioned that I was researching Islamic education in Senegal, it was assumed that I was interested in *talibés*. While the Wolof word *talibé* literally means student of Islam, in Senegal the term is associated with the highly visible phenomenon of young boys, brought by clerics from rural areas, who beg for food and small change in the streets of cities throughout West Africa. Since the early 1990s, UNICEF and a host of national and international NGOs have pushed the government to reform or control the *daaras* under the banner of child rights and child protection. They demand an end to child begging, corporal punishment, unhygienic conditions in which some *talibés* live, and other dangers they can be exposed to such as

⁴ The Pulaar term for Qur’anic school is *dudal* (pl. *dude*), meaning hearth, alluding to the fires around which students learn. However, inhabitants of Medina Diallobé use the Wolof term *daara* borrowed from the Arabic word *dar*, meaning house, the original term being *dar al-Qur’an* or house of the Qur’an. I also employ the term *daara* as it is more prevalent in state, academic and media discourses on Senegal.

drug and sexual abuse. In the dominant NGO and media discourses on *talibés*, clerics tend to be depicted as abusive monsters.⁵

In policy terms, over the last decade the interest in *talibés* has shifted from being predominantly a child protection issue to a concern that *daaras* constitute a barrier to ‘quality’ education. However, these two bodies of discourse share commonalities, namely that *daaras* are a ‘problem’ to be solved. Certain key critiques reoccur, often made in highly value-laden language. Examples can be found in the policy document titled *Plan Stratégique de Développement des Daara* (Strategic Plan for Development of the *Daara*) published by the Senegalese Ministry of Education. The *daaras* are described as being in an “archaic state” and “situation of marginalization, exclusion and oblivion” (MEN 2009, p.9). The report refers to the lack of state control of the *daaras*, criticising the absence of policy documents, regulations or evaluation, and the plurality of school models and their “anarchic proliferation” (ibid., p4). The learning environment often comes under attack: “the majority of *daaras* are in a very precarious state. They are in total destitution” (ibid., p.5) and “their buildings often do not respect ergonomic norms” (ibid., p.7). Finally, teaching and content are assumed to be of low quality, as there are no standardised curricula and teachers do not undergo state training programs. Students who ‘just’ learn the Qur’an are portrayed as having few economic options: “the *daara* sector undermines the very future of thousands of children each year” (ibid., p.3).

Such disparaging remarks are also commonplace in academic literature, even among otherwise critical scholars of comparative education, for instance: “Within Africa, Qur’anic and other Muslim schools have generally not been a serious academic alternative to secular (i.e. Western and at least unofficially Christian) education” (Samoff & Carroll 2007, p.370). Publication of NGO reports on *talibés* are usually accompanied by a media frenzy which, despite occasional disclaimers contained within them that these cases reflect only *some* of the *daaras* in Senegal, largely in urban areas, has led to a widespread international impression that Islamic education in Senegal is synonymous with begging *talibés*. One simply has to type ‘Islamic schools in Senegal’

⁵ See in particular Ware’s analysis of the Human Rights Watch report *Off the Backs of Children: Forced begging and other abuses against talibés in Senegal* (2010), and accompanying media responses, in Chapter One of his recent book *The Walking Qur’an* (2014).

into the image bank of an internet search engine to find evidence of the sector's popular association with the overwhelmingly negative image of begging *talibés*.

In contrast to Qur'anic schools which primarily teach religion and operate outside state control, I found that many development actors consider schools which are standardised, under state control, and which incorporate Islamic elements within a predominantly secular curriculum and Western-style school model, to be more desirable alternatives. Indeed, a cornerstone of the government's current ten-year education strategy, the *Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence 2013-2025* (PAQUET) includes creating such state-controlled religious schools to encourage a move away from classical Qur'anic schools in communities "resistant" to state schooling (MEN 2013, p.35). Terminology used to describe these different kinds of Islamic schools often reflects an opposition between modernity and tradition. For instance, the *Plan Stratégique de Développement des Daara* defines "modernisation" of *daaras* as formalising *daara* functioning, providing concrete classrooms with desks, integrating non-religious subjects and official languages into curricula, and using ICTs in teaching (MEN 2009, p.5). This tendency among some development actors to frame religious and secular education on a continuum from 'traditional' to 'modern' goes beyond Senegal, for instance Gandolfi, chair of UNESCO Italy and Professor of Comparative Education at Bologna University, states:

From the beginnings, the *médresa* [Islamic school] in Africa has taken two directions: the first modernist, in the image of the European School, where one studies Arabic, Islam and scientific subjects in a European language; the second conservative, namely to take the model of the Arab world with Arabic as the sole language of instruction (2003, p.268, my translation from French).

These assumptions among development actors about the low quality of *daaras* are often accompanied by presumptions regarding parental choice of such schools. Parents who send their children to *daaras* are often portrayed as traditionalists ignorant of the schools' poor standards, or too poor to choose otherwise. For instance, a report on *talibés* in Senegal published by Human Rights Watch and titled *Off the Backs of Children: Forced Begging and Other Abuses Against Talibés in Senegal* states: "parents' treatment of the children they choose to send hundreds of kilometers away to

marabouts ranges from neglect to knowing complicity in abuse”. They also assert that “pressed financially, some parents send their children ostensibly to learn the Quran, but also to alleviate household expenditures” (2010, p.85). A report on child labour in Senegal titled *Comprendre le Travail des Enfants et l'Emploi des Jeunes au Sénégal* by Understanding Children’s Work, a collaborative project between UNICEF, the ILO and World Bank, also asserts that:

If a child entrusted to a Qur’anic teacher is an ancient practice in Muslim settings, originally for the purpose of religious education, the phenomenon of pauperization, people looking for survival strategies that promote fostering of children, [...] has generated a ‘perversion’ of these traditional practices, slippages in which children are the first victims (UCW 2007, p.46).

The assumption that it is primarily poor parents who send their children to Qur’anic schools also goes beyond Senegal. Gandolfi generalises across West Africa to assume that “without adaptation, Qur’anic schools [...], risk becoming a refuge for the poor and all those who do not benefit from access to state education” (2003, p.273). In the ‘war on terror’ discourse, the supposed association between poverty and Islamic education is currently driving the fear of Qur’anic schools among development actors in countries like Pakistan, as the poor and unemployed are seen as easy recruitment targets for terrorist organisations (Bano 2012b, pp.45–46; Bayat & Herrera 2010; Rao & Hossain 2011, p.624). Meanwhile, the empirical observation is made that many affluent parents take advantage of the state school by sending their children to *daaras* only as a form of pre-school before beginning primary school, or as extra-curricular study during school holidays (Gandolfi 2003, p.267). Thus, scholars and development practitioners who asked me about my research also presumed that well-off people in Medina Diallobé would ‘do both’ according to the pattern of state-schooling-with-the-*daara*-on-the-side, with full-time Qur’anic schooling preferred only by the poor

However, the reality I observed in Medina Diallobé completely challenged these dominant perceptions of Qur’anic schools as being associated with destitute *talibés*. The *daara* students toured the village households requesting alms when not learning the Qur’an, and did face beatings, but were never taken to cities to beg in horrific conditions. Indeed, the overwhelmingly negative portrayals of *daaras* in much NGO

and government literature have been criticised for not reflecting their diversity (Thorsen 2012, pp.8–9).⁶ The Qur’anic schools were also not perceived by parents as being of poor quality. As documented elsewhere (Perry 2004; Ware 2004b; Ware 2014, pp.39–40), parents and students agreed that education in a *daara* entailed some hardship, and had well-developed arguments as to why a degree of discomfort was necessary to the learning process. The Qur’anic schools were also considered to be better run and more effective in their stated goals than state schools. This view challenged stereotypes that state-run schools are by definition more efficient in their performance and day-to-day running than the supposedly “anarchic” *daaras* operating outside state control. The clerics were considered in high esteem by the majority of village inhabitants, for their teaching practice and wider social roles. Nor were my host family who chose the Qur’anic school ignorant, poor traditionalists. They belonged to a noble lineage and were relatively affluent by local standards. Several of the men had advanced levels of education in state and Islamic sectors and had travelled extensively, including to study, to Europe, Central Africa, the USA and Middle East. Many had deliberately chosen full-time Qur’anic schooling for their sons over the state school, and were not forced to do so by poverty or similar constraints.

One final aspect of the situation in Medina Diallobé which contradicted that expected by many development practitioners I spoke with in Dakar, was the degree of influence different individuals exerted over the education trajectories of children and young people. The professionals I met often assumed that young people have limited control over their educational trajectories which are defined by their parents, their fathers in particular. It is difficult to find mention of family educational strategies in policy literature. Most discussion is focused on offer, with school demand assumed to be linearly related to supply (Lange 2003a). However, implicit assumptions about family educational decision-making dynamics are revealed within research studies of organisations and education ministries. A recent report by the French Directorate General of International Cooperation and Development titled *Systèmes de Production, Revenus et Pratiques de Scolarisations des Agriculteurs* on educational decision-

⁶ In fairness, the latest report by Human Rights Watch (2014), titled *Exploitation in the name of education: Uneven progress in ending forced child begging in Senegal* does very well to make clear that not all *daaras* in Senegal exhibit the abusive and unsanitary conditions characteristic of some urban schools. It shows how many clerics deplore these conditions, and that they reflect the experiences of a minority of *talibés* (2014, pp.4, 9, 23–25). However, the report continues to reproduce the stereotype of poor, neglectful parents and passive students critiqued below.

making in Senegal recognises that decisions are taken at the level of the family. However, it then describes children's input as "marginal" and focuses on investigating the views of male heads of households rather than any other family members (DGCID 2008, p.24). A study conducted for the Ministry of Education on conditions in *daaras* states that "*talibés* are placed in *daaras* by direct family members" which acknowledges that the wider family plays a role in children's education, but infers that children themselves have no say (MEN 2010, p.125).

Many reports are more explicit in presenting children including *talibés* as passive victims without agency. A study by Anti-Slavery International titled *Begging for Change: Research Findings and Recommendations for Forced Child Begging in Albania, Greece, India and Senegal* describes all begging within *daaras* as forced begging, namely "forcing boys and girls to beg through physical or psychological coercion". Forced child begging is then framed as falling under the wider category of forced labour defined by the ILO as "work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily" or "slavery, servitude or a practice similar to slavery" (Delap 2009, pp.1–2). The practice of children travelling with clerics to *daaras* where they beg on arrival has been labelled by many NGOs as trafficking. Trafficking is defined by the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking of Persons Especially Women and Children as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons [...] for the purpose of exploitation". As all child begging is assumed to be forced, and therefore exploitative, any children migrating to Qur'anic schools are considered to be trafficked whether or not they agree to it, thus denying them any agency (Delap 2009, pp.3, 6–7; c.f. Einarsdóttir et al. 2010).

However, in Medina Diallobé extended family members had significant influence over young people's educational trajectories, often with as much or even more authority than fathers. Young people were also far from passive 'victims' of their families' decisions. Boys attending *daaras* were self-reflective and keen to talk to me about their experiences and aspirations for the future. I witnessed children as young as eight actively pursuing solutions to education-related problems, including asking me for help with homework when their parents could or would not. Even more indicative, many young people, male and female, from the age of twelve upwards pursued educational

trajectories which went against their parents' wishes, including choosing to attend Qur'anic rather than state schools.

To summarise, the lived reality in Medina Diallobé thus seemed to be at odds with some important prevailing assumptions about educational decision-making held by development professionals I met, and which are manifest implicitly and explicitly in education policy documents and development grey literature. These assumptions can be summarised as follows: 1) state schools constitute a 'quality' education including being economically beneficial, while Qur'anic schools do not; 2) state schools are empowering to girls while Islamic schools are not; 3) in a strongly Muslim context, parents will prefer religious rather than state schools for their daughters; 4) affluent parents prefer state schools, while poor families are more likely to send their children to Qur'anic schools; and 5) within families, parents, but fathers in particular, have the most power over educational decisions while women and especially children have little or no influence.

In the rest of this chapter, I explore the logics underlying such assumptions in order to frame the questions and argument that I will develop in this thesis. I also develop an alternative way of understanding both parents' and young people's evaluations of different forms of schooling, which might account for the apparently unusual realities in Medina Diallobé. In this process, I establish the role of the complex intersection of 1) preferences for school types; 2) the influence of identities; and 3) other practical factors that shape educational decision-making. These different elements shaping educational trajectories are considered in the next three sections.

1.2 Understanding school preference: Debates surrounding “quality education”

The first assumption noted above relates to the value, usefulness, or worth attributed to the different schools available in Senegal. In dominant development discourse, secular state schools are considered to be economically beneficial, while Qur'anic schools are not. This is considered to have a relatively simple and linear influence over people's preferences, namely that they will only choose Qur'anic schools if they cannot afford state schools or because state schools are poor 'quality' and fail to deliver on their promises of economic benefit. This section unpacks the logic behind this assumption,

demonstrating that it carries significant weight in development thought despite its flaws. The section finally proposes an alternative way of comprehending educational value and its relationship to people's preferences.

One of the most embedded assumptions in development is that a system of mass secular schooling confers economic benefits on the individual and society. The greatest support for this notion is Human Capital Theory, first elaborated by economist Gary Becker (1964). He argues that, regardless of a pupil's background, 'education' has utilitarian benefits. Becker recognises schooling, university and learning through work as forms of 'education' but places most emphasis on the benefits of primary school. Individuals gain directly by increasing their earning potential, while 'external' benefits - which go beyond the individual - are conferred on everyone in society through economic growth (McMahon 1987). Becker acknowledges other 'non-monetary' social benefits, including increased propensity to vote and improved health, although he states that these benefits are less significant than monetary ones (Becker 1993). Human Capital Theory and its utilitarian approach to schooling has enjoyed enormous influence within economics, and the social sciences including development studies and education (Ball 2007). It has also greatly shaped education policy in the global South. Comparative macro-statistical studies were used to support Becker's proposition that primary schooling confers utilitarian benefits, especially in less developed countries (Psacharopoulos 1973; 1981). Investment in mass school systems to kick-start economic growth and reduce poverty was therefore pushed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Sayed 2008, p.54).

These assumptions about the utility of mass schooling lead to presumptions about people's preferences and choices for different kinds of schools. The dominant model to explain decisions in neo-classical economics, and also for explaining educational decision-making within development studies (Nkurunziza 2007, p.15), is Rational Choice Theory. According to this framework, people are assumed to be rational actors who prefer the most utility-maximising option available (Schulz 1987). As economists assume that economic analysis is objective and universally applicable, they also assume that people share preferences for a given asset (Stigler & Becker 1977), in response to the market value of that asset. The value of schooling as an asset with future productive potential (Woodhall 1987) is considered a given, and hence parents' preference for this

mode of education for their children is assumed. Objectively-measurable school value is therefore assumed to coincide with and school preference.

When people's choices do not match these expectations, economists impute inadequate information of opportunities as an explanation (Allais 2012, p.262), or observable structural barriers rather than unobservable differences in preference (Blaug 2001, pp.124–125). This logic is widespread in scholarship on education in international contexts. Given the prevalent assumption of universal school utility/value, anything short of universal school enrolment or situations where people do not engage with the school, are framed in negative terms as a 'problem' to be 'solved'. Reasons for not attending school are described as 'barriers', not valid preference for alternatives. The three main reasons or 'barriers' given for not attending state school are: direct and indirect poverty whereby parents cannot afford school fees, uniforms, stationery, extra tuition, or the opportunity costs of losing their children's labour; equity barriers which make the school inaccessible to people with certain social characteristics for instance along the lines of gender; and poor 'quality' schools which do not confer economic returns (e.g. Hunt 2008). Households are classified as 'poor' according to neo-classical economic norms of household income and consumption, typically the ability to purchase a basket of pre-defined goods (Nkurunziza 2007, p.23). The 'solutions' economists and development actors propose are: reducing direct and indirect costs of school; reducing structural barriers like gender discrimination; and improving 'quality' (e.g. Sayed 2008).

However, although Western education scholarship initially accepted Human Capital Theory's model that schooling universally conferred utilitarian benefits, it has been challenged since the 1970s. Critical sociologists demonstrated that schools do not embody a universal and objective economic utility, nor do they lead to meritocratic social mobility. Marxist-inspired scholars (Althusser 1969; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Young 1971) focused on class as the most significant basis of social inequality, and argued that schooling positions pupils to take on unequal roles in the capitalist class structure (Siegel 1998). Undoubtedly, the model of universal school utility falls down when tested empirically. To support the notion that state school is economically and socially beneficial, economists tend to rely on statistical analyses using country-level survey data showing correlations between schooling and other variables considered

‘desirable’ such as lowered fertility rates and improved child nutrition. This ‘proof’ can be criticised for imposing value judgements on what constitutes ‘desirable’ social outcomes; focusing on the macro-level rendering local variation invisible; using proxy variables such as school enrolment rates which do not prove evidence of school achievement or learning; and assuming schooling is causal in these correlations, when micro-level studies show that pathways of cause and effect are more complex and unpredictable (Jeffrey et al. 2008; Pilon et al. 2001; Stephens 1998).

The economic model of utility and meritocracy also masks how, in many postcolonial settings (Dore 1976; Irizarry 1980; Jeffrey & Mcdowell 2004; Lipton 1977), including African countries (Argenti 2002; Bloch 1998; Serpell 1999), rising participation in school has been accompanied by declining salaried employment among all but the most privileged members of society. Indeed, formal schooling inherited from the European model typically devalues manual work, reproducing class position and privilege (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Willis 1981). It is thus largely irrelevant to agricultural economies with detrimental effects for the rural poor, leading to “de-skillment” for rural livelihoods (Froerer 2011, pp.700, 704; Rival 2000, p.115).

Alternative models of education provision which go beyond economic utility have been elaborated. Paulo Freire’s model of popular education and grassroots literacy developed in Brazil in the 1960s (1970/1993) reflects a more communal vision of human development. Education is offered to marginalised populations in order to encourage reflection on structural inequalities, with the ultimate aim of supporting political action for the redistribution of wealth and power. Tanzania’s first independent president, Julius Nyerere, conceived of a school system designed for the development of the most marginalised citizens, run by communities and intimately connected to local rhythms and culture (Nyerere 1967). Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize-winning economist working in international development, also challenged Human Capital Theory (Drèze & Sen 1995; Sen 1999). Sen’s alternative framework, known as the Capabilities Approach, argues that the goal of development should not be economic growth but increasing people’s capabilities to do or be the things they consider valuable. Sen emphasises the intrinsic value of education as an opportunity for improving life, seeing it as an “unqualified good” for expanding people’s capabilities and freedoms (Walker & Unterhalter 2007, p.8). He is therefore against universalising constructions of capabilities, and advocates

for processes of inclusive participatory debate to define policies and ‘quality education’ in a given context (Drèze & Sen 1995).

However, Human Capital Theory has continued to enjoy popularity and has greatly influenced the development of formal education globally. In much of Latin America, although Freire’s model of popular education and adult literacy prevails in NGOs, formal schooling is characterised by an economic efficiency approach (Bartlett 2003). While education innovations have sporadically flourished on the African continent, aid dependence has discouraged experimentation oriented towards social rather than economic goals (Samoff & Carroll 2007, p.378). Similarly, while the World Bank rhetorically embraced the Capabilities Approach in the 1990s, its education policy remains directed by its utilitarian concerns. A range of actors with contrasting approaches convened during the EFA Conference in Jomtien in 1990, and the World Declaration defined the goal of EFA broadly as universal access to education services “of quality”, emphasizing the importance of “recognising that traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage have a value and validity in their own right and a capacity to both define and promote development” (UNESCO 1990, p.6). However, the World Bank and its utilitarian ideas came to dominate policy (Vaughan 2010, pp.415–418). In practice ‘meeting EFA by 2000’ became synonymous with the narrow goal of attaining universal primary school enrolment for children of appropriate age. While the declaration stresses ‘partnership’ between donors and developing countries in designing country-specific education policies, in reality donors have more influence within this relationship than national governments, while what teachers, parents and pupils consider valuable is rarely taken into consideration (Lange 2003a, pp.147–148). Indeed, the notion that the principle benefit of formal state schooling is its potential to promote production remains widespread within African development policy (Samoff & Carroll 2007), as reflected in Senegalese Ministry of Education reports (MEN 2006, p.40).

Hence, in practice the model of ‘education’ promoted within international development policies throughout the world today is remarkably homogenous (Lange 2003a, p.150). Regardless of location, the model of ‘education’ promoted to achieve economic growth is that of the school, reflecting common characteristics including: *ideals* that mass education is a universal human right and that schooling has positive effects including productivity, economic growth and national development; *basic structure* of mass, often

compulsory, schooling organised by a central bureaucracy whether a government institution or ministry, with recent efforts made to ensure universal enrolment; an *educational institution* based on the ‘principle of the classroom’, age-graded classes⁷ with one teacher, and pupils taught together regardless of differences such as ethnicity, caste, and often gender; and *content and instruction* based on an official, nationally-universal core elementary curriculum of language, maths, social and natural sciences, arts, and physical education, with pedagogy usually whole-class lecture and recitation with seatwork (Anderson-Levitt 2003, p.6). While the influence of neoliberal ideology on education policy has caused states to withdraw from school provision, this process has been accompanied by increased regulation of private education, so that the officially-sanctioned school model is still promoted despite a greater diversity of providers.

Of crucial importance to the Senegalese context, this global model of ‘quality education’ includes assumptions about the value of religion, and the appropriate role of faith in schools. The school promoted by international development actors is ideally secular, although faith-based schools are considered acceptable as long as they are ‘weak’ or ‘moderate’ and teach religion within strict parameters (Deneulin & Bano 2009, p.116).⁸ For instance, religion can be taught as a subject as long as it is compartmentalised so that other subjects are taught within a rationalist conception of the world whereby events are explained in materialistic terms according to scientific principles. Any faith must preferably be taught in an objectified manner, as one belief-system among many. Finally, a school can teach religious or moral education as long as it does not compromise on the core curriculum described above. Proponents of this model of ‘quality education’ typically display negative attitudes towards ‘strong’ faith-based schools which focus on religious instruction and encourage a strong, distinct religious identity – such as Qur’anic schools in the Senegalese context. Common accusations include that strong religious schools promote intolerance towards other faiths and neglect the core curriculum, and hence have little economic utility as they supposedly fail to equip pupils for the modern world.

⁷ See Serpell (1999, pp.115–117) for a brief history of the development of age-graded classes in Europe, and a critique of their inappropriate promotion in other cultural contexts.

⁸ See comparable debates about faith-based schools in the UK (Burtonwood 2003).

The notion that strong faith-based schools do not confer economic benefit is also linked to another pervasive assumption in Western social science - the secularisation thesis. This theory, developed by sociologists in the classical tradition including Emile Durkheim (1912/1959), Max Weber (1920/1963) and Jürgen Habermas (1962/1989) holds that processes of ‘modernisation’ in production in 18th century Europe were accompanied by a parallel shift in values and beliefs from ‘traditionalist’, ‘primitive’, ‘superstitious’ religious thought to rational, scientific explanations. It was assumed that this pattern was universal, and that the role of religion would decline as all societies modernised, retreating to the private sphere of personal faith (for summaries see Furseth & Repstad 2006; Stark & Finke 2000). The secularisation thesis underpinned Modernisation Theory dominant in development studies from the 1950s, and its proponents assumed that reorganisation of social and cultural institutions would not only accompany economic growth but actually facilitate it. Hence, religion was mainly considered, like ‘culture’, as an obstacle to economic growth and hence development (Nkurunziza 2007, p.34).

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Beyond the flawed assumption that state schools confer economic utility, a second fundamental critique of Human Capital and classical Rational Choice Theory is that education cannot be compared analytically with an asset with productive potential (Allais 2012, p.262). In turn, people do not pursue education solely for economic reasons, but also for its ‘intrinsic’ value (Unterhalter & Brighouse 2007, pp.79–80), including to have a more rewarding and fulfilling mental state, increased self-esteem or well-being. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that everyone agrees on universal definitions of value (Noddings 1995, pp.122–131). To clarify, critical theorists who demonstrated that schools do not lead to social mobility and equal utility for all pupils have also argued that schools are not sites of knowledge transmission based on neutral or shared values. Rather, the knowledge and values they promote reflect the worldview and interests of the elite, imbued with class, gender, race and other biases (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Connolly 1998; Reay 1995). Within this understanding, controlling knowledge and school institutions is central to the exercise and reproduction of power relations. It enables elites to greatly influence the ways we think about the world,

favouring reproduction of social structures that underpin their social, economic, cultural and political privilege, as Durkheim (cited in Eickelman 1978, p.486) notes:

“Changes in ideas of knowledge in complex societies and the means by which such ideas are transmitted result from continual struggles among competing groups within society, each of which seeks domination or influence. [...] Thus the forms of knowledge shaped and conveyed in educational systems [...] must be considered in relation to the social distribution of power.”

Scholars working within a critical post-colonial framework have used this observation to argue that from the colonial period onwards, historically and culturally particular conceptions of educational value and practices of schooling have often been imposed on very different, locally-situated or ‘indigenous’⁹ systems of knowledge and learning (Levinson 1996; Levinson & Holland 1996; Masemann 2005; Rival 1996). Although well-intentioned, the goal of universal compulsory schooling is a consequence of a distinctly Western set of values and practices, which has been diffused around the world along with a more general cultural model of the modern nation-state (Meyer et al. 1997). Mass schooling emerged in Europe in the 19th century as part of the state-building process, and was adopted by the rest of the world after the Second World War, under economic pressure from the World Bank and other aid donors (Arnové 2003, p.2; Samoff 2003). This narrow model of schooling excludes many other things which people consider valuable, including teaching vocational or practical skills, adult learning, or indigenous knowledge including local customs, history, geography or cosmology (Abdi 2008; Aikman 1999; Altbach 1971). European and official national languages tend to be prioritised over minority ones (Brock-Utne 2006; Brock-Utne &

⁹ I use the term indigenous according to its definition by Sefa Dei (2002, p.339): “Indigenous knowledge is knowledge arising with the long-term occupancy of a place (Fals Borda 1980; Fals Borda and Rahman 1991; Warren, Slikkerveer and Brokensh 1995). It is knowledge unique to a given culture or society characterized by the common sense ideas, thoughts, values of people formed as a result of the sustained interactions of society, nature and culture. Roberts (1998) has also defined “indigenous” as knowledge “accumulated by a group of people, not necessarily indigenous, who, by centuries of unbroken residence, develop an in-depth understanding of their particular place in their particular world” (p. 59). “Indigenous” from these perspectives rejects colonial imposition and signals the importance of problematizing anything which is imposed or dominating (Fanon 1963; Memmi 1969).” Breidlid adds that the term “indigenous” need not only apply to people of indigenous minorities as defined by the UN, like “the Indians in the Americas, the Lapps in the circumpolar North, or minority indigenous groups in Asia or Oceania”, but also to “the majority population in Africa that originated on the continent before the colonization process of the 19th and 20th century” who “adhere to cultures, belief systems, and epistemologies that differ from the hegemonic Western ones” (2013, 31–32).

Skattum 2009). Pedagogy rarely includes apprenticeships, learning-through-doing, or a differentiated curriculum (Anderson-Levitt 2003, pp.6–7). Teaching is based on groups of common age rather than shared ability, although there is no evidence that this is always necessary for effective pedagogy (Serpell 1999, p.115).

With respect to faith-based instruction, the dominant model of school as ideally secular and materialist also reflects an ideological legacy specific to the Western context. In the 1960s, Western philosophy of education was dominated by epistemological assumptions that knowledge claims were objectively true or false depending on their conformity to rational criteria. Leading theorists of the time (e.g. Hirst 1974) therefore defined liberal education as intellectual initiation into conceptually discrete forms of rational knowledge which they felt would be conducive to creating unbiased and tolerant citizens of a liberal-democratic society, and which they distinguished from processes of social conditioning or indoctrination (Carr 1998, p.4).

However, these theoretical claims to objectivity made by education philosophers have been challenged by social scientists for reflecting the embedded assumption of the secularisation thesis, and presuming that religious education entails indoctrination. The liberal model neglects how religion plays an integral part in many people's definitions of well-being (Deneulin & Rakodi 2011) and comprehensively learning one's faith within 'strong' faith-based schools is often a crucial aspect of this (Bano 2012b; Deneulin & Bano 2009, p.116). Hence, extensive evidence from Southern contexts from the colonial period onwards reveals tensions between states' prioritisation of secular or 'moderate' faith-based schools, compared with parents' demands for 'strong' forms (Bano 2009; Hefner 2006). However, the liberal secular school model as the model of 'quality education', which permits a limited role for religion, continues to exert most influence on education policy (Carr 1998; Siegel 1998) including in international development (e.g. as in the work of Nussbaum 1997; 2003; 2006). While in the past fifteen years significant donors and organisations including the World Bank have engaged more with faith-based organisations to deliver development goals, including supporting faith-based schools to meet EFA, they tend to cherry-pick those whose work is compatible with secular agendas (Deneulin & Bano 2009, p.25). Hence, the state school on a secular, materialist model continues to be promoted within development

policy, with 'strong' faith-based schools not meeting this definition of quality education assumed to be of less economic and social value.

Proponents of Rational Choice Theory, who assume that people's school preferences follow an objective definition of school value, thus face dilemmas when trying to explain why people choose to attend religious schools over state schools, if the former supposedly have no economic value. Rational Choice theorists have thus attempted to adapt the model which assumes people are utility-maximising, to accommodate non-economic forms of value which can include religion. Explanations for people's preference for faith-based schools draw heavily upon influences from sociology, often shaped by the secularisation thesis. One theory is that choosing religion is an 'irrational' anomaly. This assumption has its roots in the 19th century, as many classical sociologists and anthropologists presumed that religious belief was a figment of the imagination of pre-modern or 'primitive', irrational minds (Stark & Finke 2000). While it is no longer considered acceptable to voice such anti-religious sentiment and pass it off as scientific, the idea that religion is somehow irrational has nonetheless persisted in other guises. Socialisation Theory is a second explanation for religious behaviour, associated with functionalist approaches to social science popular in the mid 20th century. It suggests that there is an element of irrationality in religious behaviour by arguing that people are passively socialised into religious belief and make decisions reflecting this internalised logic even if it does not benefit them (Furseth & Repstad 2006).

However, alternative explanations reject this assumption of irrationality, but instead attempt to attribute religious belief to materialist explanations, as opposed to, say, intrinsic value of religious affiliation. Karl Marx' (1844/1955) idea that religion is the 'opium of the people', a compensatory comfort to those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, has proved particularly influential. This has been translated into Deprivation Theory which proposes that people choose religion because of difficult circumstances of material or social poverty and psychological insecurity (Glock & Stark 1965). Finally, Rational Choice theorists propose that people choose religion for material rewards at the lowest cost possible (Iannaccone 1997). While overcoming the idea that religious behaviour is irrational, these theories nonetheless marginalise the intrinsic benefits of religion, tending to attribute its popularity to a social or material deficiency.

In contrast to these narrow and value-laden constructions of ‘quality education’ and *a priori* assumptions of school preference, anthropologists have attempted to define education in broad and neutral terms to capture the complexity of learning practices and forms of knowledge which people in diverse times and places have considered to be valuable. They remind us that schools are but a subset of the broader field of education that occurs throughout everyday life, and focussing only on school misses the broader, continual but less visible efforts everyone engages in to transform their conditions (Friedman Hansen 1979; Varenne 2008a; 2008b). This can include small things like the routine instructions people give each other about what to do or what not to do, and the everyday pursuit of information or advice. Varenne’s definition of education (2008a, p.22) is useful for acknowledging these micro practices:

“The deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills or sensibilities, and any learning that results from the effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. It includes a whole host of individuals and institutions and relations between them, and effects of each on the other.”

In addition, while schools are important sites of struggle where elites attempt to influence and control knowledge, social theorists have also demonstrated that people do not unquestioningly accept the school institution or its values. While it is important to consider how educational systems can embody strategies of social control, it is also essential to look at the other side of the coin and people’s agency, namely how “populations appropriate educational systems for their own purposes” (Starrett 1998, p.61). Hence, rather than passively accepting models of school utility dominant in international development, people’s perceptions of educational value are ‘culturally constructed’. This process of cultural production of educational value, as developed by Willis in his ethnography *Learning to Labour* (1981) about working class young men’s engagement with schooling in England, can be defined as “the active, collective use and explorations of received symbolic, ideological, and cultural resources to explain, make sense of, and positively respond to ‘inherited’ structural and material conditions” (Willis 1983 quoted in Demerath 1999:163).

In order to overcome limiting models of school preference informed by Human Capital and Rational Choice Theory, social scientists have proposed alternative theoretical frameworks to accommodate the different forms of value people attribute to educational options. Particularly popular in sociology and anthropology of education is Pierre Bourdieu's framework of habitus, or "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu & Nice 1977, p.72; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977), which are internalised and often unconscious ways of thinking about and interacting with the world. Habitus is developed through past experience and pursuit of capital (Bourdieu 1987; 1990), defined as "scarce goods and resources which lie at the heart of social relations" (Connolly 1998, p.20), understood as existing in economic, social, symbolic and cultural forms. Scholarship using the concepts of habitus and capital have greatly informed this thesis, especially for illuminating the reproduction of social inequalities through schooling; the importance of social networks and pursuit of status in shaping education preference; the complex ways in which intersecting dimensions of identity influence different groups' experience and access to the benefits of schooling; and how behaviour reflects a balance of social constraints but also choice and agency on behalf of social actors (Connolly 1998; Froerer & Portisch 2012; Gérard 2001; Jeffrey et al. 2008; Lange 2003b; Lydon 2004; Reay 1995; Robinson 2000b).

However, I would question how well Bourdieu's framework fits discussion surrounding faith-based schooling. Bourdieu's writing on religion has been criticised for being overly influenced by Weber, tending to portray religion as an instrument of oppression and exploitation by the elite which seeks to indoctrinate a particular habitus. Although later theorists have argued that spiritual ideologies and dispositions like piety can be regarded as a form of cultural capital manipulated by lay people as much as elites (Verter 2003), the conceptualisation of religion as capital still tends to reduce its pursuit to instrumentalist ends. Developed in the context of faith-informed educational decision-making in Pakistan, Masooda Bano (2012b) has proposed an alternative model which overcomes this tendency, and which I employ in this thesis. Bano suggests that people's preferences reflect three categories of value. The first is economic, as people consider which knowledge or skills best facilitate their access to employment. The second form of value Bano describes as 'material', and is linked to status. This type of benefit can lead to improved physical circumstances which are not necessarily economic, such as increased marriage prospects, access to useful contacts or networks,

and greater authority in the home or community. The third form of value is ‘ideational’, or intrinsic, which corresponds to the fact that people pursue education for ideas or ideological reasons regardless of whether it leads to economic or material benefits. Bano points out that consideration of these three forms of value operate simultaneously, and are combined in unique ways, in shaping people’s preferences. She further highlights that educational evaluations are highly context-specific, and reflect inherited historical trends (2012b, pp.13–17):

“People [...] value different things in different contexts; this is because they have different propensities and historically shaped preferences. Preference formation cannot thus be understood without recognizing the influence of history and culture, and the subjective nature of individual preference.”

Paying attention to the specific forms of knowledge which people in a given context value is therefore essential to understanding their educational preferences, especially when they contradict dominant expectations held by development actors, as in Medina Diallobé. This theoretical insight has informed a central question of this thesis, namely what forms of knowledge people in Medina Diallobé consider valuable.

1.3 The role of identity in shaping preference

The following two assumptions which inspired the research of this thesis are that (2) state schools are empowering to girls while Islamic schools are not, and (3) Muslim parents prefer Islamic rather than state schools for their daughters. These assumptions concern constructions of identity – of gender and being Muslim - and their supposed links to evaluations of schooling. As I will demonstrate, both assumptions were challenged in Medina Diallobé: parents, including Muslim clerics, preferred state schools rather than Islamic schools for their daughters, while the experience of attending state school did not necessarily provide girls with more social options than those who did not attend school, or who attended Islamic schools. To make sense of these assumptions, this section begins by discussing scholarship which acknowledges that people’s evaluations of education are embedded in constructions of identity. It then unpacks the assumptions about gendered decision-making to show that, while these

assumptions usefully recognise that identity plays an important part in influencing people's preferences, they are nonetheless flawed as they entail simplistic and prejudiced predictions about how gender intersects with other aspects of identity such as religious affiliation.

Along with demonstrating that schools do not impart value-neutral forms of knowledge, an important contribution social scientists have made to our understanding of education is to show that in addition to transmitting knowledge, schools also form certain kinds of persons and shape their identity. Again, defining 'education' as referring not only to schooling but to "continuous, ubiquitous, pervasive" processes of social interaction (Cremin 2007:8), anthropologists have pointed out that all social institutions and groups, from the family, to religious institutions, work spaces and schools, have definitions of the 'educated person'. This construction relates not just to knowing specific information or having the ability to carry out technical procedures, but also to doing so according to established expectations and rules. These social rules of interaction may be arbitrary and irrelevant to the task being carried out. Hence, the definition of being 'educated' in a given situation involves more than the acquisition of knowledge, but of being a certain kind of person, and possessing a defined identity (Levinson & Holland 1996). The definition of the educated person in a given context entails a model of how to achieve that identity, and so defines the logic behind people's preferences for various learning opportunities available to them.

A crucial question this raises is to what extent people accept the dominant constructions of identity in their social context. Social scientists in the 1970s strongly argued that people are constrained by constructions of identity, in educational institutions and beyond. For instance, Michel Foucault (1976) developed the concept of discourse to conceptualise how often unconscious cultural framings influence identity constructions which restrict the options to which people can aspire. Discourse produces 'truth', or what a given society, at a particular historical time, holds to be self-evident. Therefore "discourses not only dictate what it is possible to say or do, but also establish the kind of person one can be" - people are "fabricated" into the social order (MacLure 2003, p.176). Foucault's idea of discourse can be compared to Bourdieu's notion of habitus, where norms and practices shaping one's behaviour result in habitualised ways of thinking, and hence become internalised and unquestioned. The social order is then

perceived not as arbitrary, but as self-evident and natural, and alternative ways of being and doing become unimaginable (Bourdieu & Nice 1977).

While discourse and habitus are useful concepts, several scholars have criticised Foucault and Bourdieu for implying that people always accede to the hegemony of dominant frameworks (MacLure 2003; De Certeau 1984). Reynolds (2005) argues that Bourdieu's formulation is too static as it underestimates flexibility in everyday situations through which individuals can affect change, so that relationships are more malleable and negotiable than he would suggest. For example, Reynolds documents how young people in Zambia question dominant identity constructions, and resist complying silently with tradition. Similarly, in rural Sudan, Katz found that children "resisted the identifications offered by the larger society by constructing identities outside the normative trajectory" – whether with the approval of, or in opposition to, household members and community elders (2004, p.256).

Indeed, qualitative scholarship on decision-making in postcolonial contexts reveals that evaluations of school value, and constructions of educated persons, are highly context-dependent. Each context is based on a specific historical legacy, but also the constantly evolving dynamic of dialogue between education providers and recipients. For example, studies from Papua New Guinea (Demerath 1999), Tanzania (Stambach 1998), Nigeria (Bankole 1988) and Mexico (Levinson 1996) show that once attending state school failed to lead to salaried employment, young people began to celebrate 'traditional' knowledge and identities in opposition to the school. In parts of the Middle East (Adely & Starrett 2011), Pakistan (Bano 2012b), Mali (Amselle 1992; Brenner 2000; Warms 1992) and Niger (Meunier 1995), this has been linked to popularity of Islamic schools. However, contrasting evidence from India (Jeffrey et al. 2008 Chapter 3), Mali (Kail 1999, cited in Gérard 2001, p.79), Côte d'Ivoire (Proteau 1995) and Burkina Faso (Yaro 1995) reveals that parents and young people facing a similar predicament have instead embraced the status of a state school-based definition of the educated person despite the institution's low economic returns.

Examples such as these show how the range of educated identities people pursue is diverse and fluctuating, and high valorisation of a school-based educated identity cannot be assumed. Certain factors have been found to correlate with certain evaluations of the

school, namely cultural and religious history of a location; the degree of cultural proximity between the school and pupils' everyday lives; previous relations between the state and a given community; the extent to which state school-based definitions of the 'educated person' have become entrenched due to attending public school becoming a norm or "institutionalised" (Gérard 2001, p.64); and the availability of alternative forms of school and their relationship to power (Morgan & Armer 1988; Pilon et al. 2001, p.214). However, these factors do not have great predictive potential, as although some trends can be identified at macro-level, simple correlations are harder to make at micro-level. Indeed, qualitative evidence shows that educational decisions are highly specific to spatial and temporal contexts. Common strategies are not necessarily motivated by the same evaluations of value, and vice versa, similar preferences can result in divergent strategies. Educational strategies are certainly not linearly related to school supply, despite this being assumed in much international education policy (Gérard 2001; Lange & Martin 1995; Lange 2003b).

Thus far, this section has neglected to consider how the culturally-specific criteria associated with being intelligent or socially competent that makes up definitions of the 'educated person' also shifts according to an individual's social position or group membership (Bloch 1998; Levinson & Holland 1996, pp.2, 21). Hence, ethnic, gendered, and age-appropriate identities feed into constructions of the identity of the 'educated person'. This observation invites us to consider the assumptions described at the beginning of this section which reveal the role of gender constructions in definitions of school value and people's preference for different schools. Development professionals I met assumed that Islamic schools are less economically and socially beneficial to girls than state schools, and that Muslim parents prefer to send their daughters to Islamic rather than state schools.

The promotion of mass schooling in the global South by international development actors has always been accompanied by constructions of gender which advocate in favour of girls' formal education. According to Human Capital Theory, education for girls as well as boys should be encouraged for utilitarian reasons. Constructions of gender identity prevalent among economists in the 1970s assumed girls' role to be reproductive while boys' was productive. Girls' schooling was promoted to indirectly ensure economic growth as 'educated females' were expected to have lower fertility.

Knowledge of 'modern' housekeeping was considered to make the household run more smoothly to the advantage of male producers, and improved child-rearing skills seen to prepare the next generation more effectively. It was only in the 1970s that girls' schooling was seen in terms of making them productive actors in their own right (Jones 2006; Resnik 2006; Unterhalter 2007; Vaughan 2010). Feminists from the 1980s criticised the utilitarian approach of Human Capital for instrumentalising girls' schooling, and accepting constructions of femininity entailing subordination to men. They argued that education has an important role to play in fostering more egalitarian gender identities, by eliminating structures of power and exclusion including discriminatory laws and customs (Kelly 1978). Their ideas dovetailed with those developed within the Capabilities Approach, that education is important for achieving social justice by addressing gender inequalities in access to capabilities. Gender and education theorists criticise the still-dominant utilitarian focus on girls' school enrolment (e.g. Hanushek 2008), arguing instead that the definition of quality schools needs to ensure that the curriculum, learning materials, pedagogy and teacher–pupil relations reject gender discrimination and social injustice (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005; Stromquist 2003; Unterhalter 2007).

As commendable as these endeavours are, there is a strong current in international development thought and practice, specifically among gender and development theorists and practitioners informed by secular feminisms, that 'religion', and hence religious schools by definition, inculcate patriarchal constructions of gender at odds with Western feminist ideals of equality. These constructions include cultural norms which frame women's primary role as being domestic and reproductive, and men's as being productive. Religion supposedly places limited importance on women's formal education, especially if it encourages them to challenge these practices and social relations (Tomalin 2007, p.1). Islam in particular receives strong critique from many Western feminists, and the religion is often held responsible for being at the root of all Muslim women's problems (Balchin 2011). Hence, it is assumed that Muslim parents will prefer strong faith-based schools for their daughters so that they learn appropriate domestic roles. By contrast, these theorists tend to value secular public schools for overcoming these supposedly harmful religious discourses.

As an illustration of this logic, in her review of gender and development literature on issues including women's reproductive rights violations and spread of HIV/AIDS, Tomalin (2007, p.13) finds that authors frequently blamed religion for these ills while promoting secular schooling as the solution, despite their providing little empirical support for either assumption. Such views are evident in reactions to the post '*Harnessing religion to improve education in Africa*' on the Oxfam GB blog 'From Poverty to Power' (Green 2012).¹⁰ The post reviews a study on how governments in Niger, Mali and Senegal have incorporated Islamic elements into state schools to address popular demand for religious education, resulting in an increase in female enrolment (Villalón & Tidjani-Alou 2012). One commentator responded:

“We need to talk about how women's rights [...] are compromised by religious education. [...] I wouldn't want my own children in a faith-based school [...]. Secular education is a right fought for in many countries, so let's not let pragmatism blind us to the sacrifices we make if we have to accept faith providers. [...] Well sorry, I think religion is just that - brainwashing.”

However, these discourses about the economic and social benefits of secular or moderate faith-based state schooling as compared to strong faith-based schools are not necessarily supported by empirical evidence. The assumption that secular state schools are necessarily beneficial to girls ignores how they are embedded in patriarchal societies. For instance, teachers from secular state and Islamic schools in Bangladesh (Asadullah & Chaudhury 2010) and Pakistan (Saigol 1995; 2003) hold similar ideological views relating to gender. Furthermore, there is no linear relationship between a girl's years of schooling and age of marriage, and while women's earnings increase with schooling they usually remain economically dependent on men (Stromquist 2003, p.152). State schooling does not necessarily increase women's decision-making authority or control over their fertility (Rao 2012, p.31).

In addition, while religious discourses are certainly mobilised in many contexts to constrain women's options, generalisations on this basis ignore religious movements countering such trends. Religious discourses can be used to promote women's

¹⁰ This post, and ensuing debate, can be read at <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/harnessing-religion-to-improve-education-in-africa/>

autonomy or education, as in the work of Islamic feminists (Badran 2011; Mernissi 1996; 1997). Scholars have documented the empowering potential of Islamic education and religious discourse for women in recent decades in Asia (Jamal 2005; Matsumoto & Shimbo 2011; van Doorn-Harder 2012), the Middle East (Minesaki 2012; Sakurai 2011) and Europe (Spielhaus 2012). Even within a framework where women are subordinate to men, religious knowledge or proficiency can confer more material status on girls than secular state schools, with significant implications for girls' and parents' education preferences.

Furthermore, as with economic models of school utility, gender constructions promoted by international development actors are not value-neutral but reflect specific ideologies surrounding what ideal gender relations should look like. In many cases they collide with alternative models that people in specific local circumstances subscribe to. Indeed, girls' school attendance can contribute to 'de-skillment', eroding the basis of women's locally-situated domestic or 'indigenous' knowledge and the status it confers on them (Aikman 1999; Naji 2012). Alternatively, advanced schooling can reduce girls' marriageability which is often their main opportunity for social mobility (Heissler 2011, pp.737–738). In many Muslim contexts, Islamic feminists disagree with the assumptions embedded within much Western gender theory that social construction of gendered difference necessarily entails "a hierarchical division between women and men" (e.g. Jackson & Scott 2002, p.1) and hence oppression of one gender over another. Many Islamic feminists would argue that Islam considers that women are different to men and play different roles, but they are nonetheless equal. They criticise feminist goals which aim to make men and women more similar as being an imposition of Western secular values (Tomalin 2007, pp.21–22).

In response to contexts where women have lower preference for state schools than men, leading to lower female school enrolment, Amartya Sen (1995) and education philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2001) propose that women have been so socialized into accepting subordinate status that they have lost any sense of alternatives. They call this phenomenon "adaptive preference". Other gender theorists have pointed out that these assumptions which construct certain patterns of behaviour – for instance based on Muslim women's "adapted preferences" – as irrational or devoid of agency is deeply problematic (Baber 2007; Mahmood 2005). Indeed, Bano (2012b Chapter 6) notes how,

in Pakistan, parents' preference for Qur'anic schools for their daughters reflect a weighing-up of economic, material and intrinsic value. Parents prefer this option to counter unrealistic and consumerist aspirations their daughters learned in the state schools, and to further their marriage prospects given that their chances of salaried employment are slim anyway. Young women also value this education for economic income as religious teachers, intrinsic benefit of self-esteem and psychological well-being, and material gain of respect in their community and authority in their family.

In addition, while gender has become a central variable of analysis in education and development research, policy and practice since the 1990s, other forms of differentiation for instance linked to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or socioeconomic status, have been documented but not subjected to as much rigorous analysis (Samoff & Carroll 2007, p.370). Indeed, as I show later, social hierarchy identities comparable to a caste system operate in the Senegalese context and strongly influence education preference. Yet, there is a lack of research on the impacts of these constructions of identity, or of their intersections with gender. Compared to state schooling, there is little comprehensive research conducted on preferences and decision-making surrounding faith-based schools in postcolonial contexts by either economists (Asadullah et al. 2015) or scholars of comparative education (Starrett 1998). While gender and development theorists frequently repeat that religion is a barrier to women's empowerment, there is a dearth of concrete research within this field actually on decision-making and the implications of religious values on women's education and employment (Tomalin 2007, p.27). The result is that simplistic ideas about the intersections of religious and gender identity are allowed to circulate, for instance neglecting questions such as how religious discourse intersects with other contributory factors like poverty in influencing limiting constructions of gender. These insights inform central questions of this thesis, namely how gender and being Muslim – and other facets of identity - intersect to influence people's subjectivities and education.

1.4 Understanding educational decision-making processes

The previous sections have debated education preferences, but scholars including Bano (2012b, p.14) stress that it is important to make a distinction between *preferences* and

decision-making processes leading to educational outcomes. An observed endpoint like enrolment in a particular kind of school can be arrived at through entirely different combinations of preferences and/or decision-making processes. To consider one example, imagine two girls who drop out of state school to get married. One preferred to stay in school, but her father forced her to marry which she did as she had little influence over the decision-making process. The second girl preferred to marry and drop out of school, and although all her family members and husband wanted her to continue she took the decision independently to get pregnant thus legitimising her dropping out. Distinguishing between these two cases – and that they reflect divergent preferences and decision-making dynamics - is essential for development practice, as recognised in qualitative educational research on drop-out stressing the difference between ‘push’, ‘pull’ and ‘falling out’ factors on school drop-out (Doll et al. 2013). This is not, however, to ignore that preferences and decision-making mechanisms are related; they exist in a perpetual cycle as people re-adjust their preferences or aspirations in light of past decisions and possibilities (Bourdieu 1974; 2000; Froerer 2012).

The final two assumptions identified earlier in this chapter concerned educational decision-making processes, namely the mechanisms through which people attempt to transform their preferences into reality. The first of these assumptions is that (4) affluent parents are more likely to send their children to state schools, while poor families send them to Qur’anic schools. This assumption therefore attempts to explain decision-making patterns observed *between* households of different socioeconomic status. The last assumption (5) is that educational decisions are made within nuclear families, and that male heads of households exert most power over children’s trajectories. Women are supposed to have less influence, and children in particular are seen as passive. This assumption therefore makes predictions about decision-making *within* individual households, theorising who the main actors are, and who have most influence. As I will show, both of these predictions are countered by realities in Medina Diallobé, as it is sons from affluent rather than poor families who are more likely to attend *daaras*, and I observed children, young people and women all actively debating education and influencing the trajectories of themselves and other members of their extended family. This section therefore reconsiders models which make assumptions about the link

between socioeconomic status, identity and school choice, and the implications of alternative approaches for this thesis.

As argued earlier, Rational Choice Theory takes for granted that parents will value mass public schooling for its economic benefits, which leads development actors to infer that most parents, especially affluent ones, are more likely to send their children to state schools for income-generating possibilities. By contrast, it is presumed that religious schools, particularly those which provide pupils' board and lodging like Qur'anic schools, appeal to parents who cannot afford the fees and costs associated with secular state schools. Similarly, the increased popularity of private faith-based schools teaching secular and religious subjects among middle-class parents in recent decades is attributed not to intrinsic value of religious education, but rather the deprivation posed to parents by the fall in 'quality' of secular public schools. In addition, the implicit categorisation I encountered among development professionals, and even within some academic literature, that parents who choose secular schools, or faith-based schools which fit liberal education criteria, are not only richer but also more 'modern' than 'conservative' or 'traditional' parents who choose strictly religious schools, smacks of deep-rooted prejudices about the 'primitive mind'.

Bano's model shows how people's preferences combine evaluations of intrinsic, material and economic benefits, and that this also applies to decisions taken as much as preferences. Indeed, this model proves very useful in avoiding the pitfalls of sociological theories discussed above which create dichotomies between 'economic utility' and 'intrinsic value', and hence reduce religious behaviour, including choice of faith-based schools, to either 'irrationality' or economic deprivation. As Bano puts it, within dominant approaches to religious behaviour "even when religion is considered to be intrinsically appealing, this appeal is believed to exist because of dire material conditions, and not because religious ideas themselves can have meaning" (2012b, p.7)". Brenner (2000, p.236) also warns against this simplistic dichotomy between 'intrinsic' and 'economic' appeal of religion in the context of educational decision-making, specifically when discussing parental choice for Islamic schools in Mali:

"The juxtaposition of money with religion often appears in discussions of schooling choices. The issue at stake is not 'work' or 'money' versus 'religion'

but also to the larger social order and whether one's children will be fully and properly educated so that they become the kind of responsible and productive adults their parents want them to be.”

Bano therefore argues that recognising intrinsic value underpinning people's choices is crucial, and one cannot assume that religious behaviour is motivated by instrumental reasons alone. Having said this, people might prefer a particular school type because they perceive that it has high intrinsic value, but they are more likely to transfer that preference into a real-life decision to attend that school type if the intrinsic value coincides with material and/or economic value. However, this is not the same as arguing that pursuing material and economic value was the only, or over-riding, factor in their decision. Similarly, one cannot assume that a particular decision was taken, not because someone actually wanted it, but because they had no other choice due to material or economic deprivation.

In addition to its problematic assumptions about the relationship between families' socioeconomic status, religiosity, and decisions to attend faith-based schools, neoclassical economics has also been critiqued for subscribing to a simplistic definition of poverty based on household income which does not adequately reflect access to assets, or barriers to them (Greeley 1994). This raises problems when generating quantitative correlations between a household's socioeconomic status and educational outcomes of its members. For instance, dominant definitions of the 'household' used in development studies to generate statistics on income tend to focus on people who live together. This can exclude members who are absent, such as migrants, but who contribute significant amounts to household budgets (Randall et al. 2008, p.3), a situation typical in Senegal as shown in the following chapters.

In addition, anthropological evidence from many African contexts shows that logics of accumulation based on “wealth in people” (Guyer 2009), or networks of allies or dependents owing favours, operate alongside material acquisition. Many contexts of entrenched political and economic inequality – including Senegal - are also characterised by clientelism, defined as the social relationship between people with more control over resources and those with less, based on an interpersonal relationship and an unequal exchange between the two (Coulon 1975, p.38). Patrons distribute gifts

to followers to obtain and strengthen loyalty and support, while clients obtain material benefits and protection (Clapham 1985). Indeed, evidence from Nigeria (Morgan et al. 2010; Willott 2011) and Côte d'Ivoire (Proteau 1995, pp.637–638) show that relationships of clientelism between individuals or families are as important as income in mediating access to educational opportunities. Finally, the neoclassical model of socioeconomic status treats households as individuals, and thus ignores relationships between them such as structural or identity-based forms of inequality which restrict people's access to income or wealth. As I show later, the caste-like social hierarchy in Senegal (which exists more widely in West Africa and the Sahel) exerts such an influence and is strongly related to households' assets.

The assumption presented at the beginning of this section also presumes how educational decisions are taken *within* families. The dominant model in neoclassical economics considers that the nuclear family of a heterosexual couple and their children is the basic decision-making unit. While classical Rational Choice theory proposed that parents make joint decisions which maximise their combined utility (Becker et al. 1977; Becker 1973), gender theorists have strongly argued that this assumption exaggerates the degree of agency people have, and erroneously presumes that decisions taken are mutually beneficial to all household members (Folbre 1984; 1986a; 1986b; Kabeer 1994). Reacting to the unencumbered rational actor model, other scholars (e.g. Sen 1990) have gone the other way by assuming that women internalise the dominant patriarchal ideology of marriage and conform to its norms despite it not contributing to their definitions of well-being, a trope common in much Western feminist writing (c.f. Jackson 2007; Rao 2012, p.26). As a result, women have come to be framed as passive, and/or irrational. Again, 'religion' and 'culture' are often blamed, and a pervasive notion exists within gender and development studies that there is an Islamic model of the family entailing a monolithic set of behavioural prescriptions. In this model, Muslim men are homogenously depicted as patriarchal oppressors, and Muslim women as passive victims (Mohanty 1994, pp.342–343). Finally, classical economic models of the family presume that children are passive and have little influence over decisions. Indeed, little attention is paid in development to children's influence over their school trajectories (Hashim 2004, p.118).

These assumptions can all be challenged in several ways. The idea that decisions affecting children are taken within nuclear families has been critiqued for being ethnocentric and not reflected empirically in many African contexts. Instead, ties of lineage often override conjugal bonds (Oyěwùmí 2002, p.3; Sudarkasa 1996, p.81); members of extended families and wives within polygynous marriages frequently cohabit and exert significant influence over each other's lives (Pilon & Vignikin 2006; Teolis 2009); and fostering children into the care of extended family or non-kin, including for educational reasons, is widespread (Einarsdóttir 2006; Kielland & Gaye 2010; Pilon 2003).

The idea of women's passivity in household decisions has been countered empirically. Although there is no doubt that in many African contexts men enjoy public decision-making roles which women do not (Adriansen 2008, p.211), and women will state when asked formally that men make most educational decisions (Kielland & Gaye 2010, p.98), this can mask the degree to which women exert covert influence over household decision-making. For instance, Silberschmidt (1992) describes how, when questioned directly, women in Kenya ascribed most decision-making power to their husbands, but accounts of informal decision-making revealed that in reality many women took decisions themselves, avoiding open confrontation while still getting their own way, and feigning ignorance if challenged later. In addition, in many non-Western contexts older women exert significant informal influence in family-related decisions, sometimes contradicting and opposing the views of their adult sons (Aubel 2006).

Children's supposed passivity can also be challenged. It is true that social norms in many African contexts mean that children must restrain from overt expressions of feelings, preferences and decisions if they contradict those of their elders, at the risk of causing significant tensions within the family (Thorsen 2006, p.94). This has also been documented with respect to educational decision-making, for instance in Ghana (Twum-Danso 2009) and Mali (Sanou & Aikman 2005). Nonetheless, while the official line is that children should be seen but not heard, in reality evidence from Burkina Faso (Thorsen 2006), Mali (Brenner 2000, p.240), the Sudan (Katz 2004) and the African continent more generally (Argenti 2002) reveals that due to massive economic and social changes, children and especially adolescents in postcolonial African settings frequently disagree with their parents and elders including with regards to educational

trajectories. Alternatively, children covertly influence education-related decisions, as documented in Ghana (Hashim 2004 Chapter 6).

One report titled *Child Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau* provides a detailed empirical report to the widespread assumptions that children are forced into attending Qur'anic schools, and that their migrating with clerics to study by definition constitutes "trafficking". The researchers identified *talibés* who had run away from Qur'anic schools, but also ones who wanted to attend for the opportunity to travel, and others who had actually been forcibly "repatriated" home against their will by NGOs. As the quote below demonstrates, in such examples it can be the NGOs who, ironically, are more guilty of transporting children against their will than clerics:

The boy and others from the village were sent to [a *daara* in] Dakar. [...] According to what the boy said, some Senegalese people approached the boy when he was begging and fooled him. These people said they were going to give the boys money but then locked them up in a room together with many other boys like him. All the boys were then put into an aeroplane and sent to Bissau. [...] Having their child repatriated was very embarrassing for the family members and they argued they were not at all happy with the situation. The boy himself wanted to go back to Dakar and complete his studies there (Einarsdóttir et al. 2010, p.41).

To counter these models which deny women and especially children agency, social scientists have proposed that, rather than imagining characteristics associated with age and gender to be fixed, to see these categories as socially constructed and relational. From the 1980s it has been increasingly recognised that although childhood is a universal phase of human life characterised by rapid physiological growth and psychological development, the way biological facts are interpreted in relation to notions about children's appropriate behaviour and abilities including agency varies hugely between cultures (Spyrou 2001; James & James 2004). The idea that children are passive is therefore a construction, and while they are often constrained in their actions, they nonetheless actively use their own opinions, skills and abilities to organise their environment, and creatively produce and reproduce cultural facts through negotiations with adults and peer cultures (Lombardini 2001). Similarly, households are

neither harmonious decision-making units nor rigid and completely constraining sites of gender and age-based subordination. They are characterised by cooperation and pursuit of individual interest, shaped by malleable culture and context-specific norms which allow members a degree of leverage and bargaining power (Jackson 2007; Kabeer 1994; Kandiyoti 2005).

However, classical economic research - including within development studies - tends to ignore these social power relations between people, informed by culturally-dictated expectations which shape individuals' possibilities, instead treating women, men and children as separate categories with different characteristics existing alongside each other. Economic models of decision-making generally treat social behaviour as based on aggregated individual behaviour. Indeed, Fine argues that mainstream economics has little to offer social analysis as it does not consider the systemic nature of social relations, structures, power, conflicts and meanings (2002). For instance, gender and age are seen as characteristics of persons rather than complex and constantly shifting systems of norms or relationships which come into play through social interaction.

The theoretical flaws of economic explanations for behaviour are compounded by methodological weaknesses. The aggregate model of social behaviour is reinforced through positivist statistical analyses based on nationally-collected data or pre-defined questionnaires, which use generalised categories for the sake of comparison. This is at the expense of context-sensitive qualitative interviews or case studies which explore the reasons people give for behaving the ways they do (Bano 2012b, p.13). For instance, much comparative education literature on education and social mobility aims to uncover statistical relationships between social variables, school attendance and earning power (Froerer & Portisch 2012, pp.333–334). Similarly, while a great deal of gender and development literature argues for a nuanced analysis of power relations influencing people's educational experiences, this is "little evident in studies of African education, which for the most part continue to list variables and attempt to test their relative importance" (Samoff & Carroll 2007, p.372). This results in a wealth of data on *factors* coinciding with educational outcomes, but render invisible people's actual *preferences* and the complex *processes* of decision-making (Hunt 2008, p.23; Pilon et al. 2001). Many NGO reports are clearly even worse, cherry-picking examples which fit their agenda to only present one side of a complex story.

However, when studying human behaviour it is essential to use a methodology which does not attribute values to people's observed actions without empirical evidence for doing so (Tomalin 2007, p.28), hence the need to consider how preferences and decision-making processes combine to produce final observed outcomes. To recall the anthropological definition of education as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills or sensibilities" (Varenne 2008a, p.22) cited in a previous section, 'deliberation' implies "the joint activity of people talking about something that happened outside their immediate setting, making practical decisions about what is to happen next, and then publically reflecting on what just happened" (2008a, p.31). The inclusion of the notion of deliberation in the definition of education therefore recognises micro-level practices entailed in the process of materialising educational preferences, best captured through qualitative research methods.

1.5 Towards an applied anthropology of education

As described above, this thesis originally responded to an empirical conundrum: what explains the disparity between the patterns of educational decision-making among inhabitants of Medina Diallobé village, and the predictions of development scholars and practitioners? I could have used this case study to ask questions from the point of the development actors: why do people from Medina Diallobé behave so strangely? What is anomalous - or even 'irrational' - about them that their behaviour does not correspond to any common-sense predictions? Instead, I do the opposite, and use this empirical anomaly to open up a theoretical Pandora's Box to challenge these 'common sense' ways of thinking dominant in development studies and comparative education.

Section 1.2 considered the widespread notion that state schools are economically beneficial while Qur'anic schools are not, and that this is the defining issue which informs parents' preferences. However, qualitative research has shown that a universal and objective measurement of school utility does not exist, as people's definitions of educational value informing their preferences are highly dependent on current and historical context, and must be investigated rather than taken for granted. Economic

incentives are not the only factor people consider, rather intrinsic and material benefits are additionally taken into account. Human Capital Theory and the secularisation thesis ignore how people's evaluations of educational utility reflect how schools are embedded in political economies at local, national and global levels, and differential access to employment opportunities. These insights encourage us to ask of the Medina Diallobé context, how do local perceptions of economic opportunities influence people's evaluations of education utility? What forms of knowledge do people value, which do not confer economic benefit? In what ways do people's school evaluations break down the assumed dichotomy between the school as conferring economic utility, and religious education chosen 'irrationally' for its intrinsic value, or for reasons of material deprivation?

Section 1.3 illuminated how constructions of identity are central to ideas of the 'educated person' and shape evaluations of different types of education in a given context. While this is acknowledged to some degree within comparative education and development research, emphasis on gender as the dominant form of identity operating to influence school decisions has resulted in neglect of how other forms of social difference shape people's experiences. Assumptions about how gender and religious identity inform people's education preferences also reflect Western constructions of ideal gender relations, and prejudices about the impact of religion – especially Islam – on these dynamics. These critiques push us to ask, to what extent are dominant definitions of the 'educated person' in Medina Diallobé informed by the state school, in comparison to other forms of knowledge? How do constructions of gender and religious identity actually influence educational preference? Aside from the other 'usual suspects' of age, ethnicity and class, a caste-like social structure is widespread in West Africa but rarely comes up on the radar of those unfamiliar with the local context. This thesis therefore asks, how does this additional significant form of identity distinction play a crucial role in school choice?

Section 1.4 problematised dominant understandings surrounding educational decision-making processes. The idea that affluent parents will choose state schools and poor parents send their children to Qur'anic schools reflects not only rationalist and secularist biases about educational preference, but also assumptions about the influence of 'poverty' on people's ability to operationalise their preferences. Measures of poverty

based on individual household income ignore how assets enabling people to achieve their educational preferences circulate within networks. This observation invites us to ask, how is wealth conceptualised in Medina Diallobé and what are the pathways through which it circulates? How is access to wealth affected by identity constructions, such as caste-like social hierarchies? In what ways does access to assets influence educational trajectories?

Section 1.4 also critiqued the idea that men are the main decision-makers within nuclear households. It demonstrated how lineage-based family norms and relational constructions of gender and age grant members of extended families, women and children various degrees of influence over children and young people's educational trajectories. These flawed economic models of decision-making rely on quantitative studies which simplify complexity, use pre-defined categories of analysis, and attribute preferences and decision-making processes to observed outcomes. Qualitative and ideally ethnographic research is therefore recommended to capture people's own explanations for their behaviour, embedded within their cultural and epistemological perspectives. These methods permit us to ask, what are the micro-practices of agency surrounding educational trajectories, missed through statistical analyses focussing on proxies for decision-making processes such as school enrolment? How do these practices illuminate power struggles and inequalities, but also sites for potential change?

Through answering these questions, this thesis contributes to wider debates in the anthropology of education by uncovering local meanings and values attributed to education, the ways in which people in globalised and shifting socioeconomic contexts build learning in formal and informal settings into projects of self-fashioning and social mobility, but also the inherent constraints to their realisation (Froerer & Portisch 2012). Furthermore, it is inspired by critical transformative anthropologists of education who pursue research destined to inform more empowering educational arrangements.

By understanding people's engagement with educational options, I contribute to debates on social justice in education - or access to the benefits conferred by education - by drawing on Connell's distinction between *distributive* and *curricular* justice (1992; 1993). Connell argues that since the advent of state-funded, bureaucratically controlled mass primary school systems, 'education and justice' has been framed predominantly in

terms of *distributive justice* and how to provide the whole population access to mass schooling. Such projects generally take the content and form of education for granted, as debates about “quality” in international development and comparative education mainly work within the school model. As Connell puts it, “The underlying weakness of this approach to educational justice is its indifference to the nature of education itself. For education is a social process in which the ‘how much’ cannot be separated from the ‘what’.”

He urges us to re-think ‘social justice in education’ using the concept of *curricular justice* which gives a crucial role to education form and content. As Levinson and Holland (1996, pp.23–24) argue: “If we are to pursue the ideals of distributive and curricular justice [...] then we must seek to expand educational spaces which might accommodate diverse models of the educated person.” Reminding us that “social research can usefully be thought of as a process of translation, carrying experience from one social milieu to another,” Connell (1992, p.145) suggests that by ‘thinking from’ a diversity of social standpoints (Harding 1991) we can develop education which reflects a more extensive reality. Indeed, the following chapters show how the strategies of inhabitants of Medina Diallobé illuminate the barriers to distributive and curricular justice in Senegal, but also practical ways of achieving social justice relevant to policy-makers.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Based on the insight that people’s educational preferences are shaped by historical and contemporary patterns of decision-making, Chapter Two analyses the implantation of different school types in the Islamic world including Senegal, with a focus on the region in which Medina Diallobé is situated. It analyses the evolving power relations between school providers, and how engagement with schools has been shaped by perceptions of their relevance to shifting political and economic realities, and constructions of ethnic, gendered, Islamic and – the most neglected in education research on the region - ‘social category’ identities similar to caste. Chapter Three develops methodological arguments in favour of ethnographic research and sensitivity to cultural understandings. It also presents the processes of data collection used in fieldwork, and specific contextual

information on Medina Diallobé relevant to educational choices, including dominant modes of livelihood and history of school institutions there.

The subsequent chapters are organised according to four dominant educational trajectory ‘types’ among young people in Medina Diallobé, and the preferences and processes of decision-making which lead to them. Chapter Four considers people who pursue full-time, long-term Qur’anic school education. Chapter Five examines young people who attend state primary school but then drop out during lower secondary school or *collège*. Chapter Six analyses the trajectories of those who do invest in secondary state school diplomas, namely *collège* and *lycée*. The seventh chapter looks at how young people try to ‘do both’, combining skills and knowledge associated with the Qur’anic and state schools, by attending private Islamic schools, learning informally, or alternating between school types. Chapter Eight ties together the themes which come out of this ethnographic material, and their contributions to anthropology of development and education.

Chapter 2. The evolution of knowledge, power, schools and educational decision-making in Senegal

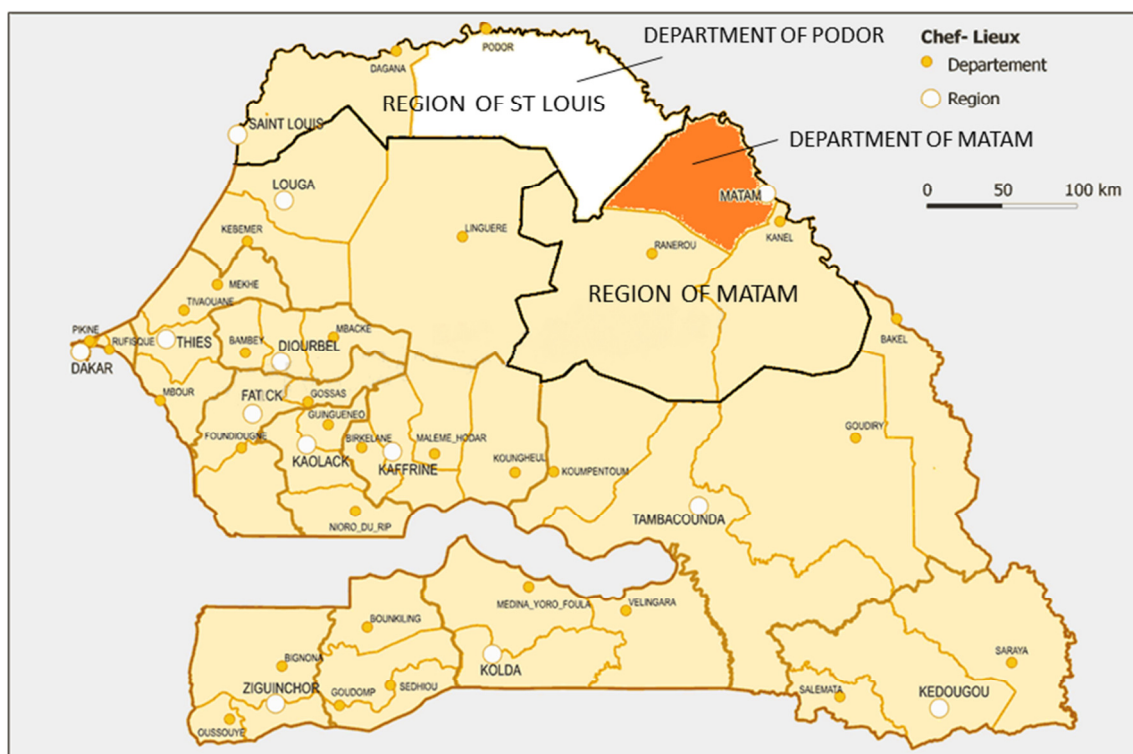
2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that constructions of educational value and identity which inform people's school trajectories reflect highly context-specific realities. People are influenced by the patterns of decision-making of those around them, which are embedded in historical trends. To understand how individuals evaluate schools it is therefore essential to comprehend the history of different schools in that location. Because actors weigh up the intrinsic value of education alongside material and economic benefits, it is also necessary to consider the social, political, and economic context in which the schools were, and are, embedded. This chapter therefore provides an account of the development of schools which feature in the decisions of Medina Diallobé residents. Section 2.2 describes the Qur'anic schools from their implantation in Senegambia to the dawn of colonisation. Section 2.3 considers the arrival of colonial state schools, and charts the emergence of private Islamic schools whose founders drew upon European school models to envisage a novel type of Muslim education. Section 2.4 documents the evolution of these three types post-independence. The final section (2.5) complements this picture of school supply with information on school demand and decision-making in the contemporary context.

This account encompasses three vertical levels. The main focus is the 'national' level, namely Senegambia and later the state of Senegal. However, where relevant I refer to the regional or global levels, by nodding to parallel developments in West Africa and the wider Muslim world. I also provide details about the 'local' level, namely particularities of the northern region of Senegal where Medina Diallobé is located. According to contemporary administrative divisions, this area corresponds to the department of Podor, in the region of St Louis (*Map 2.1*). However, Medina Diallobé lies in a wider zone straddling the Senegal River in the departments of Podor and Matam, referred to by its inhabitants from the 16th century as the Futa Tooro (*Map 2.2*). The dominant population of the Futa Tooro are the Haalpulaar'en who share, and have long shared, language, social structure, means of livelihood, a distinctive Islamic culture, common experiences of colonial occupation and implantation of different types

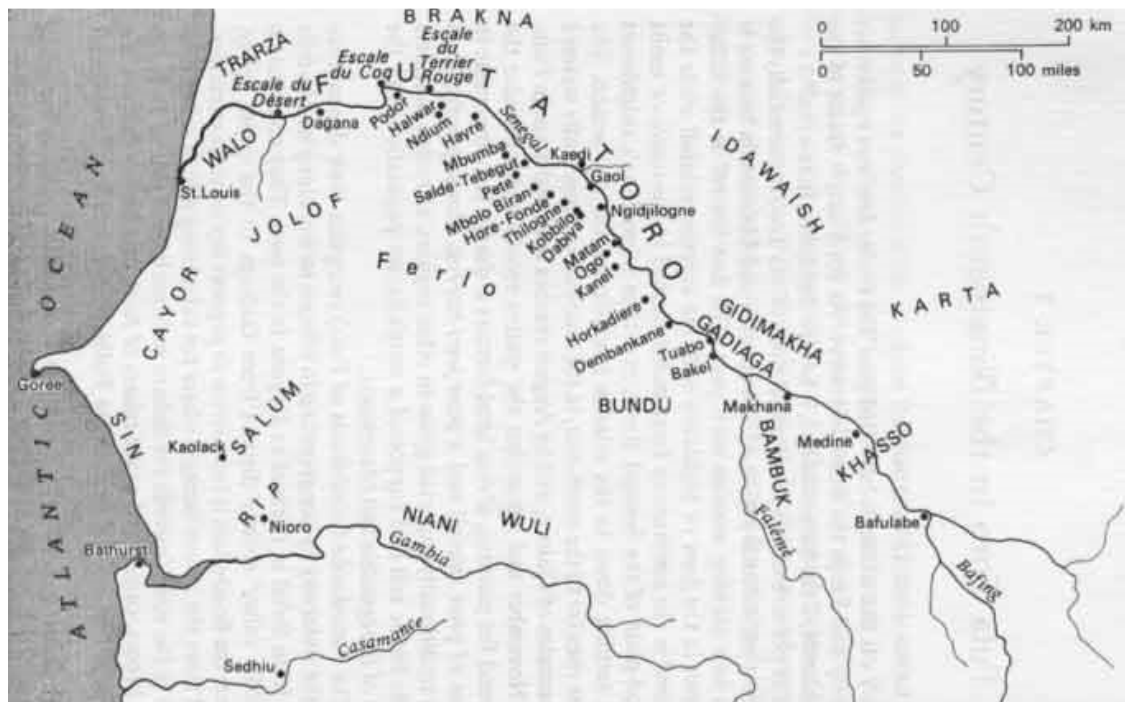
of schools. The following chapters reveal that it is essential to understand characteristics specific to this region as well as wider Senegal in order to make sense of current educational decision-making trends in Medina Diallobé.

Map 2.1: Senegal specifying the regions of St Louis and Matam, and departments of Podor and Matam.¹¹



¹¹ Map obtained from www.ausenegal.com (Ausenegal.com 2010), adapted by the author.

Map 2.2: Futa Tooro and surrounding areas in the nineteenth century.¹²



2.2 The Qur'anic schools: 1000 to 1890

Qur'anic schools throughout the Islamic world prior to European colonisation were remarkably similar despite their vast geographical spread. This account uses descriptions mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa, following implantation of Islam from the 9th century (Reichmuth 2000; Robinson 2004), although schools with similar form have existed from the first century of Islam (Kane 2012, p.27; Ware 2014 Chapter 1).

Qur'anic schools primarily taught memorisation of the Qur'an - from short verses for daily prayers to the entire text. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Islamisation was not accompanied by arabisation, and populations continued to speak their own languages (Robinson 2004, p.27). Students learned to memorise the Qur'an without literally understanding its meaning, as other subjects including Arabic grammar, Qur'anic interpretation and legal sciences were taught in specialised schools after completing memorisation (Kane 2012, p.28). This emphasis on memorisation before literal comprehension has little value from a European philosophy of education standpoint.

¹² Map obtained from *Chiefs and Clerics* (Robinson 1975) at http://www.webpulaaku.net/defte/david_robinson/chiefs_clerics/chap1.html.

However, it had several pedagogical justifications built around the school's primary aim of moral education to transform the student into a living example of the revelation, who could apply Islamic values to any context. The Qur'anic school was based on the epistemological understanding that the value of the Qur'an is not only its literal meaning, but that the text is imbued with a sacred essence called *baraka* (Cruise O'Brien 1988b; Eickelman 1976; Geertz 1968). Acquiring *baraka* through memorisation was an essential aspect of a student's moral education as it unlocks the potential of knowledge learned, protects the recipient from temptation, and cleanses the soul (Brenner 2000, p.223; Fortier 2003, p.253; Ware 2014, p.53). In Senegal *baraka* is a central ideological concept, and the enduring legitimating framework underpinning the pedagogical, social, economic and political organisation of dominant religious institutions (Gilsenan 1982, p.111; Dilley 2004b, p.10).

Students also learned to be model Muslims through imitation (*taqlid*) of the cleric's behaviour (Gérard 1997, p.230; Starrett 1998, p.100; Ware 2014, p.54). The qualification to teach, or *ijaza*, was based not on possession of knowledge alone but on proving one's exemplary religiosity (Fortier 2003, p.254; Lydon 2004, p.48). Hence, individualised instruction was valued over knowledge acquired through impersonal, written texts, as until an individual had mastered moral virtues, it was considered inappropriate and potentially dangerous that they engage in Qur'anic interpretation (Messick 1993). European travellers have long documented the strict discipline Qur'anic school students receive (Reichmuth 2000, p.423), used to instil respect for the text and those who possess its knowledge (Brenner 2000, p.223; Ware 2014, pp.42–44). Students were conferred to the care of clerics sometimes for many years, often far from their homes – a wider trend in the Islamic world that students be encouraged to travel to seek knowledge (Gellens 1990). To support their studies they begged for alms including food, and worked in the clerics' fields. These practices had educational benefits as in return for their labour students received *baraka* transmitted from the cleric through prayer or physical touch. Enduring hardship and begging were seen as essential for learning humility, generosity and the ability to withstand difficult life conditions (Perry 2004, pp.59–60; Ware 2009).

Although its primary purpose was a moral education, the Qur'anic school also had economic utility for students who studied there long-term. They could learn from the

cleric skills relevant to agricultural livelihood or trade, which has long been associated with Muslims in West Africa (Cohen 1971; Curtin 1975; Hopkins 1973; Stoller 2002). They could become teachers, jurists, or receive income for officiating at ceremonies such as marriages, baptisms, circumcisions and funerals. Students could also learn to use the properties of the Qur'an to act upon the material world. Many clerics participated in the 'prayer economy' to supplement their incomes, performing prayers on behalf of others, or selling products associated with the 'esoteric sciences', including amulets and medicines (Last 1988; Soares 2005).

For several reasons, the Futa Tooro today has a particularly dense network of Qur'anic schools and strong commitment to this type of education. The region is a band of savannah 15-20km wide straddling the Senegal River, bordered by the Sahara to the north and the Ferlo semi-desert to the south. It is 450km long, marked by the town of Dagana to the west and Bakel to the east. Despite its hot climate, the river floods every rainy season, inundating the river plain, or *waalo*, allowing for intensive cultivation. Vegetation on the highlands, or *jeeri*, consists of a little rain-fed agriculture and grass for pasture of cattle and sheep. Fishing is also practised, accompanied by secondary production of artisanal manufacture (Kane 1987, pp.23–26, 29). The *waalo's* fertility has seen the river basin settled from at least the 9th century by several important empires. Islam was spread to the region, then known as Takrur, by Berber Almoravid traders in the 10th century, and became renowned throughout the Islamic world as the cradle of Islam in West Africa (Lydon 2004; 2009).

In the 16th century, a king of the *fulbe* ethnic group founded a kingdom called the Deniyanke, renaming the Takrur region the Futa Tooro – Futa meaning land of the *Fulbe*, and Tooro after a province on the river (Robinson et al. 1972). Despite their diverse origins, the inhabitants shared Islam, a sedentarised lifestyle, and Pulaar language, so developed a shared identity as 'speakers of Pulaar' or the Haalpulaar'en (Wane 1969). By this time, Muslim clerics played an important social role, having spread Islam peacefully throughout the society via Qur'anic schools (Ware 2014, pp.79–81). However, they had diverse and lowly origins, and were excluded from political office and economic power. In the 18th century, the clerics constituted a group calling themselves the *toorobe* (s. *toorodo*) (Willis 1978), and launched a *jihad* against the Deniyanke, defeating them and establishing an Islamic state or Almamate in 1776.

A renowned cleric, Abdul Qadir Kane, was appointed leader or Almamy (Pulaar: *almaami*, from the Arabic *al-imam*). Under the Almamate, imams were recognized as the principal political as well as religious figures. Almamy Abdul Qadir established mosques and Qur'anic schools throughout the territory to islamise the society. Although Abdul Qadir's assassination by rival factions in 1807 marked the end of a strong centralised Islamic state in the Futa Tooro, the legacy of the *toorodo* revolution, including the integration of Islam into public life and political fabric, persists (Dilley 2004b, pp.34–37; Ware 2009).

A further reason for the high density of Qur'anic schools in the Futa Tooro is linked to its being the site of implantation of the first institutionalised Sufi order in West Africa. To clarify, the French traded along the Senegal River from the 17th century, but in the 19th century expanded into the interior where they faced resistance from Islamic reformers competing for power after the fall of the Almamate (Robinson et al. 1972, p.580). The most significant was *toorodo* Cheikh Umar Tall who advocated holy war (*jihad*) or emigration (*hijra*) against the French. He recruited an army in the 1850s to establish a theocratic state in what is present-day Mali. Cheikh Umar was killed in 1864, and his state toppled from 1890-93, marking the definitive beginning of French rule in Senegambia (Robinson 2000c, pp.142–143; Sall 2000).

A crucial element of Cheikh Umar's authority among the Haalpulaar clerics was his affiliation to the emergent Tijaniyya Sufi order; a form of Muslim social organisation which came to define Senegambian Muslim societies. Previously, Sufi *tariqas* in the region from the 17th century were loose associations of mystics. Only in the 18th century did Sufi leaders facing political struggle develop stronger institutional frameworks called orders (Vikør 2000). The Tijaniyya¹³ order emerged out of the older Qadiriyya in the 18th century (Abun-Nasr 1965). In the 1820s, while on *hajj*, Cheikh Umar received permission to be its representative in West Africa. Cheikh Umar's defeat stimulated an exodus of people back from his state capital to the Futa Tooro where they created a further dense network of Qur'anic schools in the new colonial administrative centres, this time of Umariyya Tijaniyya affiliation, to resist French influence. They cemented

¹³ Sufi orders are generally named after their founder: the Qadiriyya by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani from Baghdad in the 9th century; the Tijaniyya by Cheikh Ahmad Al-Tijani from Morocco in the 18th century; the Umariyya branch of the Tijaniyya by Cheikh Umar Tall, etc.

the link which still persists today between the trinity of *leydi* or homeland (the Futa Tooro), *leñol*, meaning lineage or ethnicity (the Haalpulaar) and *laawol*, the path or Sufi way (the Umariyya Tijaniyya) (Sall 2000).

Access to Qur'anic schools throughout the Muslim world was restricted along the axes of age and gender. Long-term memorisation before interpretation reflected how knowledge was framed as something *produced* by elders and *acquired* by youth (Eickelman 1978; Mead 1978; Janson 2010). The high status of Islamic knowledge also tended to be a male preserve, and in West Africa the ceremony to mark a young man's memorisation of the Qur'an often coincided with his wedding (Reichmuth 2000, p.424). While norms in the Muslim world differed, women were usually excluded from the most powerful forms of Islamic knowledge (Kalmbach 2012). In 18th century West Africa, several women from clerical families became respected scholars, teachers and jurists (Lydon 2004, p.48; Schmitz 2000, p.251), including in the *fulbe* Islamic states of Futa Jallon in southern Senegambia (Robinson 2000c, pp.134, 138–9), and Sokoto caliphate in northern Nigeria (Mack & Boyd 2000). However, women were largely barred from esoteric knowledge (Soares 2005, pp.145–147). Women were especially excluded from Islamic knowledge in the Futa Tooro, as there is no example of female Haalpulaar scholarship during the Almamate or Cheikh Umar's movement. Indeed, under Cheikh Umar's militaristic *jihad* there were fewer possible roles for female scholars, and women were relegated to marriage and the home (Robinson 2000c, p.143) where they learned domestic skills. If girls from clerical families studied at Qur'anic schools, it was as day students, learning the minimum of verses, and how to behave according to norms of female piety and politeness (Ware 2014, p.172).

Specific to West Africa and the Sahel, lineage also structured access to Islamic knowledge. Communities from at least the 13th century were organised into largely endogamous groups observing social segregation, with hereditary occupations associated with specific bodies of mystical and practical knowledge or lore (Conrad & Frank 1995; Dilley 2004b; Tamari 1991). Early on, the specialisms of freeborn groups were distinct but largely complementary. However, over time they became more stratified under the influence of Islam, with the artisans becoming more marginalised and stigmatised (Ware 2014, p.82). Groups were therefore divided into three 'ranks': freeborn lineages including clerics, warriors and kings; artisans; and captives. Among

the Haalpulaar, these ranks are known as *rimbe* (singular: *dimo*), who today make up around 70% of the population; *ñeeñbe* (s. *ñeeño*) at 10% of the population; and bondsmen (s. *maccudo*, pl. *maccube*) and bondswomen (s. *kordo*, pl. *horbe*) making up 20% of the population. The term *maccudo* is confusingly used to refer to slaves or liberated slaves, and also carries negative connotations. Therefore, in this thesis I employ the more neutral term *gallunkoodo* (pl. *gallunkoobe*), to refer to slave descendants (Schmitz 2009, p.96), although when presenting informants' quotes I use their own words. Each rank includes a number of distinct social categories based on social function, relative power, and status (Dilley 2004b). Among the Haalpulaar, the freeborn rank includes Muslim clerics (s. *toorodo*, pl. *toorobe*), warriors (s. *ceddo*, pl. *sebbe*), courtiers or advisors (s. *jaawando*, pl. *jaawanbe*), pastoralists (s. *pullo*, pl. *fulbe*), and fishermen (s. *cuballo*, pl. *subalbe*). The artisans include leatherworkers (s. *sakko*, pl. *sakkeebe*), blacksmiths (s. *baylo*, pl. *waylube*), weavers (s. *maabo*, pl. *maabube*), wood workers (s. *labbo*, pl. *lawbe*), and musicians (s. *naalanke*, pl. *naalankooobe*) including praise singers (s. *gawlo*, pl. *awlube*).

Members of ranks and categories have shifted throughout history, for instance as conquerors enslaved their former rulers (Dilley 2004b; Willis 1978), but the overall structure has remained (Coulon 1975). This is because, although categories are named after occupations, membership is perceived to be irrespective of profession, and rather hereditary and ascribed through birth. Differences between categories are essentialised, understood as “a way of being, a [...] moral and physical constitution of persons”, of sharing an “essence” or being of the same “kind” (Dilley 2000, p.150). Category distinctions are maintained through prohibitions on inter-marriage, and socialisation of children as the notion of characteristics specific to each category is inculcated and monitored from childhood through informal education mechanisms (N’Gaïde 2003).

I follow Dilley’s (2004b, p.27) terminology of ‘ranks’ and ‘categories’ over ‘caste’ or ‘estates’ to avoid cultural or theoretical overtones from Hindu caste or European feudal systems. The term ‘caste’ is nonetheless widespread in francophone academic literature, used to refer to groups within the artisan rank. The term ‘caste’ was also employed by my informants but to refer to any individual social category (e.g. ‘he is of X caste’), and to the system of ranks and categories as a whole (e.g. ‘the question of caste in Haalpulaar society...’). When quoting informants directly I use their own terminology.

In West African societies prior to colonisation, clerical lineages dominated the Islamic prayer economy and professions of teacher, jurist and healer. Islamic knowledge was closely guarded as it underpinned the clerics' group identity and livelihood (Sanneh 1976; Ware 2009). Artisans were perceived by other groups as polluting and more prone to witchcraft (Fortier 2002; Tamari 2012), blacksmiths in particular given their craft's use of fire and its perceived association with hell (Dilley 2004b, p.71; N'Gaïde 2003, p.728; Wane 1969, p.54). They, and captives, were barred from Qur'anic schools. Other freeborn lineages were excluded from advanced Islamic education (Dilley 2004a; Hanretta 2009; Ware 2014, pp.166–170; Willis 1978). This was especially the case in Haalpulaar society, as once the *toorodo* clerical category ruled the Futa Tooro following the creation of the Almamate, they sought to maintain their power monopoly by restricting access to the knowledge which underpinned their social authority. To clarify, Almamy Abdul Qadir and Cheikh Umar Tall allowed any man (including artisans and former slaves) to be a cleric on the basis of knowledge, and under these leaders the *toorodo* category swelled to 45% of the population (Bouteiller et al. 1962 cited in Coulon 1975, p.34). However, after the deaths of these progressive leaders, the *toorobe* justified their hold on power by defining their group status in terms of inheritance, developing genealogies and even claims of descent from the Prophet's family - the status of *sharif* - to support their position (Dilley 2004b, p.94). They excluded all other categories from prestigious inherited religious positions (*seerembe*), such as imams, clerics, or *khalifa* (the village representative of a Sufi *tariqa*).

Under the Almamate, the *toorobe* lineages who lead the revolution appropriated the fertile *waalo* land and hence primary source of wealth (Kyburz 1994). In many villages, they took over the inherited political titles of village chief (*joom wuro*) and chief of the land (*joom leydi*) - although some *fulbe* and *sebbe* lineages still kept the titles they had held under the Deniyanke – thus becoming the aristocratic elite of the Futa Tooro. Other *toorobe* and *rimbe* had to pay taxes to cultivate *waalo* land. *Ñeeñbe* could only access less fertile *jeeri* plots, so lived through patron-client relationships with freeborn lineages (Schmitz 1986, p.362). Captives depended on their masters for subsistence. The society was therefore characterised by patrimonial rule based on a mixture of customary authority and clientelism (Beck 2008 Chapter Four). It was a religious oligarchy rather

than a genuinely theocratic state as power and wealth were held not by the *toorodo* category as a whole, but a handful of elite aristocratic *toorodo* families.

The *toorobe* maintained their authority, and ideology of hereditary superiority, by controlling access to Islamic knowledge. For *toorodo* boys, especially of *seerembe* lineages, advanced Qur'anic school education carried huge status, and was an obligatory mark of family honour (Ware 2004a). Other freeborn boys could learn the basic Qur'anic verses but were discouraged from long-term live-in study by the *toorobe* (Coulon 1975). While slave labour enabled the *toorobe* to study and maintain their high-status pious image (Willis 1978), slaves were excluded from Qur'anic schools, as within Islamic law study of the Qur'an would grant them claims to freedom (Ware 2014, pp.168–171). The *toorobe* framed the mystic knowledge of artisans, associated with contact with spirits or *jinn*, as 'black' lore (*gandal balewal*), of the wild or bush, and morally problematic, in contrast to Islamic esoteric knowledge constructed as legitimate, religious or 'white' (*gandal diine* or *gandal danewal*). *Ñeeñbe* were barred from the Qur'anic schools, but valued and taught their own occupational and mystic lore through apprenticeship (Dilley 1989; 2004b).

The idea of a Muslim society characterised by a caste-like hierarchy, which restricts Islamic piety and the status of being a cleric to one group according to essentialised notions of difference, must surely appear bizarre to Islamic Studies scholars unfamiliar with West Africa. Indeed, from a doctrinal perspective there is no justification for such social stratification within the core Islamic texts. However, along with other anthropologists of Islamic societies, I follow Asad's working definition of Islam as a "discursive tradition" (1986, p.14) which acknowledges that practices among Muslims in specific contexts are highly diverse but are characterised nonetheless by certain core elements. In the Islamic discursive tradition, practices and definitions of orthodoxy are related to the founding texts of the Qur'an and the Hadith. In West Africa, the existence of caste-like groups of artisans certainly appears to pre-date the widespread introduction of Islam (Dilley 2004b, p.83), and the religion was adapted to suit long-established social distinctions. Using a reported incident involving Shaykhu Amadu, the leader of the Masina Empire - another theocratic state founded by *fulbe* in present-day Mali during the nineteenth century – Dilley (ibid., p.98) demonstrates that "the tension

between ‘caste’ inequality and ideal of equality among believers” was reconciled by arguing that nowhere did the founding texts explicitly forbid ‘caste’ distinctions:

Ahmadu’s Muslim advisors, basing themselves on the Qur’anic verse which states that ‘true believers are brethren’, asked for the abolition of castes. The ruler responded by serving them a stew of frogs and lizards mixed with the usual fish, mutton and chicken. He added that while the Holy book did not forbid it, it was repugnant to him to mix the freeborn and caste people (Monteil 1980: 381-2). The ideological justification for the continuance of the cultural separation of men-of-skill [artisans] and the distinctions between ‘castes’ was based on the claim that although they were not advocated by Islam, neither were they forbidden by it.

2.3 The evolution of education under French colonial rule: 1890-1960

European colonisation of Muslim populations by the late 19th century profoundly disrupted the classical Qur’anic education system. Colonising nations differed in attitude towards the inclusion of religion in public schools. In British, Portuguese and Belgian colonies, Christian mission schools were encouraged (Madeira 2005; White 1996). In French colonies, including West Africa, religion was excluded from public schools following the model of *laïcité* enshrined in French law in the early 20th century (Harrison 1988).¹⁴ The French model of secularism is a “political choice defining the place of religion in an authoritarian and legal sense” and an intended process whereby “religion ceases to be the focus of men’s lives, even when they still define themselves as believers [...] men’s actions and the meaning they give to the world no longer come under the sign of the transcendental or the religious” (Roy 2005, pp.19–20).

These differences notwithstanding, colonisers judged Qur’anic schools according to European theories of rationalist modernity combined with racism. Peoples and religions were classified along a hierarchical continuum from white, evolved, civilised, rational, modern and intelligent at the top, to black, savage, traditional, irrational and ignorant at

¹⁴ Note, however, that the earliest schools in the French West African colony were Catholic mission schools (Bouche 1968) and in contrast to other francophone African colonies, Catholic mission schools were encouraged in Haute Volta (now Burkina Faso) (Englebert 1999).

the bottom. Religion, especially mystic forms, was seen as irrational superstition, with the assumption being that societies would adopt a secularised form of Christianity on the European model as they ‘modernised’ (Saler 2006). Schools implanted during the colonial period valued knowledge that was abstract, written, and objectified. The value of a text was considered to be its literal meaning, and literacy was thus considered a skill of utmost importance. The notion that the Qur’anic text holds intrinsic properties able to act upon the world through the recitation of verses or wearing of amulets, was considered superstitious. Administrators critiqued the Qur’anic schools’ emphasis on memorisation rather than literal understanding of texts, seeing the former as pointless (Loimeier 2009; Starrett 1998; Ware 2004a). Teachers’ morality was considered irrelevant to knowledge transmission, and their legitimacy granted through written, state-granted diplomas not *ijaza* testifying to their morality. Administrators opposed corporal punishment and begging as harmful and violating European standards of hygiene, ignoring the cultural logics of forming moral persons which underpinned these pedagogies.

Whether mission or public, colonial schools were structurally similar and designed to create entirely different kinds of persons to the Qur’anic schools. Schools resembled those developed in Europe during the 19th century, a system of mass socialization to produce disciplined, competent workers (Smelser 1991). Teaching followed a timetable based on Christian rest days, unlike Qur’anic schools adjusted to the local agricultural calendar and Islamic celebrations. Learning took place within state-constructed buildings, with children sitting in rows at desks in front of a teacher, rather than on the ground in the home of the cleric. The school inculcated submission to the state rather than to the teacher as a bearer of God’s knowledge (Barthel 1985). School knowledge was only considered relevant to a small, largely male elite, and colonisers usually recruited among political chieftaincy lineages. Schooling for girls in the colonial period was limited, usually emphasising Christian feminine norms and professions considered gender-appropriate (Barthel 1985; 1989).

The colony of French West Africa or *Afrique Occidentale Française* (AOF), which included what is now the state of Senegal, was similar as the French established a school system to create a docile corps to undertake executive tasks (Jézéquel 2007). The first public school, *l’Ecole des Otages*, was established in St Louis in 1853. It aimed to

attract the sons of chiefs and in 1893 was aptly renamed *l'Ecole des Fils de Chefs* (Robinson 2000b, p.69). In 1908 a more extensive system of primary schools was established (Bryant 2011). Academic subjects considered useful to the administration and capitalist extraction economy were taught (Harrison 1988), rather than vocational skills for the predominantly agricultural economy (Balans 1972). Schools were mainly secular as experiments in the 1920s to create *médersas*, or state-run schools teaching Arabic and Islamic sciences, were quickly abandoned (Harrison 1988 Chapter Four). Where Muslim leaders were mentioned they were portrayed negatively, and Haalpulaar hero Cheikh Umar Tall was denounced for his cruelty (M. Kane 1972, p.53). Schools were based mainly in the towns of Dakar and St Louis, neglecting rural areas including the Futa Tooro. Colonial administrators perceived low utility in girls' schooling. Although some public primary schools for girls were founded in Senegal during the early 20th century, enrolment was 10% of boys', who only numbered 2500-5000 (Barthel 1989, p.69). Girls in the Futa Tooro would virtually never have attended school due to lack of infrastructure and social resistance. Nonetheless, biographical evidence of Malian *pullo* intellectual Hampâté Ba (Brenner 1997), and Cheikh Hamidou Kane's novel *An Ambiguous Adventure* set in the Futa Tooro (Ba-Curry 2008; C. H. Kane 1972), show that women influenced educational decision-making in their families and communities. They also provided economic support for children's education (Lydon 1997, p.568).

From the beginning, the French perceived Qur'anic schools as a barrier to enrolment in their schools and, by extension, their influence and control. Schools were accompanied by forced conscription to attend and aggressive policies, especially in urban areas, to control the opening of Qur'anic schools or require that clerics teach French (Harrison 1988, pp.57–58). These policies, however, had little impact for two reasons.

Firstly, although they attempted to control the Qur'anic schools, the French simultaneously bolstered the social and political power of the clerics. To clarify, in addition to the first branch of the Tijaniyya Sufi order brought to the Futa Tooro by Cheikh Umar Tall in the 1850s, several other Sufi orders emerged between the 1880s and 1930s, especially in the new economic hub of the peanut basin to the west of Senegal (Launay & Soares 1999; Triaud 1997a). These included the Muridiyya (Cruise O'Brien 1971); the Tijaniyya Malikiyya (Bousbina 1997; Robinson 2000a); and the

Tijaniyya Niassiyya (O. O. Kane 1997b; Seeseman 2011). While these ‘big three’ receive most scholarly attention, a less-documented Tijaniyya community was also established in Medina Gounass in southern Senegal, founded by a Haalpulaar disciple of the Umariyya in 1936, which enjoys significant popularity in the Futa Tooro today (Smith 2008; Van Hoven 1999). The French feared that Islam would provide a rallying point for colonial subjects to rebel. According to racist logic of the time, they perceived Islam as a ‘natural’ attribute of Arab populations, and were suspicious of ‘Arab’ strains of Islam of Istanbul, Egypt or Arabia, which they framed as orthodox and pan-Islamist (Harrison 1988; Launay & Soares 1999). They imagined that the ‘natural’ religion of black Africans was ‘primitive’ animism (Wooten 1993). Those who claimed to be Muslim had been recently converted, they argued. They practiced a ‘syncretic’ and unorthodox form of Islam, ‘Black Islam’ or ‘*Islam noir*’, characterised by ‘African’ customs including divination, spirit possession, talismanic uses of the Qur’an, and allegiance to Sufi clerics. *Islam noir* was supposedly safe and docile, and a bulwark against ‘dangerous’ Arab Islam. The empirically inaccurate construct of *Islam noir* informed French colonial policy until the First World War, as the administration supported Sufi leaders they saw as helpful to their cause. Ironically, these colonial policies enabled the Senegalese Sufi leaders to become a powerful force able to resist the colonial, and later postcolonial, administration (Robinson 2000b), and to protect and expand the Qur’anic school network.

The second reason the French failed in reducing the Qur’anic schools’ popularity was because the three new Sufi orders and Medina Gounass expanded access to Islamic education to non-clerical lineages, boosting their success (Wane 1974; Ware 2014, pp.175–176). Islam spread rapidly during the colonial period despite efforts by French administrators to the contrary, creating a new ‘Islamic public sphere’ characterised by a more standardised form of Islam. Divisions based on occupational lineage declined, with less discernible differences in outward demonstrations of piety among ‘clerics’, ‘warriors’, ‘artisans’ and ‘slaves’ (Launay 2007; Robinson 2000b). Formal slavery was abolished in 1909 and disappeared by the 1930s, so freed peoples migrated to towns and the peanut basin to work and redefine themselves free of stigma (Klein 1998; Launay & Soares 1999).¹⁵ As clerics had maintained that the most prestigious definition of

¹⁵ Migration to mask one’s low-status caste identity has also been documented in other contexts such as Nepal (Valentin 2005).

educated persons rested on Islamic knowledge, live-in Qur'anic study became an important strategy for these people to reclaim their dignity (Last 2000; Ware 2014, p.188). In urban centres, non-*toorodo* Haalpulaar'en could become clerics (Diop 1965; Wane 1969). The new Sufi orders and Qur'anic schools in towns also opened access to girls. By the 1920s, in Dakar and Saint-Louis, girls made up 30-50% of day students (Ware 2014, p.174). Girls from families of clerics, and sons of civil servants and traders, enrolled in Qur'anic schools as day students far faster than in colonial schools (Alidou 2005, pp.75–84; Ware 2014, pp.172–174). Clerics and parents who feared their children would abandon their religion, culture and social responsibilities resisted the colonial school (Launay n.d.; Gérard 2001). However, the *toorobe* aristocracy preserved the hierarchical social structure in the Futa Tooro, and the Qur'anic schools there continued their exclusionary practices against girls, and boys of non-*toorodo* lineages (Coulon 1975).

Nonetheless, throughout much of the Muslim world, many parents' definitions of educational value shifted in favour of colonial schools over Qur'anic schools for economic reasons (Berkey 2006; Brenner 2000; Robinson 2000b). In Senegal, despite the disparity between school content and cultural realities, elites saw its material utility. As Haalpulaar author Cheikh Hamidou Kane puts it, the school was like a cannon, in its inculcation of submission and cultural annihilation, and a magnet, in its promises of advance in the new order (1972, pp.40–41). Among academics and laypersons in Senegal, I frequently heard the stereotype that the Haalpulaar'en resisted French schooling, and that when the administration recruited for *l'Ecole des Fils de Chefs*, notables preferred to send the sons of their slaves. However, reality was more complex, as the aristocratic political lineages especially stood to gain from state schooling (Coulon 1975; Jézéquel 2003; Sall 1997) – a trend documented in other Muslim contexts (Hefner 2006). In 1895, the French appointed indigenous officials such as canton chief and village chief at local level. In line with neo-patrimonial politics, in the Futa Tooro these “administrative chiefs” (Olivier de Sardan 2011, p.23) were drawn largely from the customary aristocratic village chief and chief of the land lineages (Schmitz 1983). Such chiefs became powerful brokers between the colonial state and local populations, who could grant privileges to members of their clientelist network (Coulon 1975). In the 1940s, eligibility for canton chief became tied to state school

education as well as customary aristocratic lineage, creating a veritable “caste of chiefs” (Zucarelli 1973, p.224).

Beyond this political elite, until the 1920s school enrolment in the Futa Tooro hovered around the tens of pupils. *Seerembe toorodo* lineages valued Qur’anic school for spiritual benefits and the material utility of social role, identity and the elevated social status it had conferred for centuries. For the masses without access to state positions, the school represented the loss of children’s labour and threat of indoctrination into French culture and religion. This fear of colonial education at village level was actively encouraged by the Haalpulaar political elite, who then discreetly sent their sons to schools to monopolise the new opportunities they offered (Kane 1987, p.358). While in towns the sons of low-status families could take advantage of schooling, in the Futa Tooro this remained a privilege for the elite. The school-educated class even demanded that school content more closely match that of France for the status such diplomas conferred, which the regime granted in 1945 (Bouche 1968; Bryant 2011; Coulon 1975; Jézéquel 2005; Obichere 1972). It was only in the 1930s that the schooled male elite demanded more public schools for girls, to provide ‘educated’ wives for their sons, and secure good marriages for their daughters (Barthel 1985, pp.144–145).

In Senegalese towns, the popularity of colonial school among parents led to strategies to combine it with Qur’anic school. One option was sending children to Qur’anic schools from a younger age, before state school. Parents bribed officials to alter birth records to reduce a child’s age, enabling them to learn the Qur’an for longer before starting school at the ‘correct’ official age (Ware 2004a, p.86). A second option was sending children to Qur’anic schools as day students, around the state school schedule. By the 1930s, payment for Qur’anic schools in towns had become more routinised and based on colonial currency. Day students did not have time to work for the cleric or beg, so had to pay their tuition, requiring that their family had a cash surplus. Attending both schools simultaneously thus became a sign of privilege, and evaluations of pedagogies associated with long-term live-in study shifted accordingly. While begging and working for the cleric were once considered signs of privilege and the best ways to become good Muslims, affluent urban dwellers preached a new ideology depicting begging and hardship as signs of genuine poverty. They portrayed day study as a better quality education because students were not ‘distracted’ by work, although time spent learning

the Qur'an was halved. Elites were thus able to maintain their social status associated with Islamic piety, while simultaneously benefitting economically from colonial schools (Ware 2014, pp.188–190). However, this commodification of Islamic education, and shift in value accorded to live-in Qur'anic study, was initially an urban phenomenon. In the rural Futa Tooro, live-in study continued to be highly valorised and associated with the privileged *toorodo* elite.

While colonial administrators throughout the Muslim world had a low opinion of Qur'anic schools, they embraced the Islamic knowledge they perceived as useful and which served their interests. Administrators engaged in the *étatisation* (Hefner 2006, p.9) of Islamic education, appropriating it within projects of nation-building. They reformed existing systems or created state-controlled Islamic schools, to counter the influence of Qur'anic schools, undermine the clerics' power, and instrumentalise Muslim populations. Two processes occurred to package Islam within a European-style school curriculum alongside other subjects. The first is *objectification*, whereby Islam comes to be seen as a bounded and coherent system of beliefs and practices. As Starrett puts it, 'knowing' Islam thus becomes "being able to articulate the religion as a defined set of beliefs such as those set down in textbook presentations" (1998, p.9). In standardising Islam, diversity and differences in opinion are minimised without acknowledging the subtlety of contextual and historical factors affecting interpretation (Eickelman 1992; Eickelman & Piscatori 1996; Messick 1993). The second process is *functionalisation*, namely a "translation in which intellectual objects from one discourse come to serve the strategic or utilitarian ends of another discourse" (Starrett 1998, p.9). The newly systematised forms of Islam were appropriated through mass education to serve colonial interests. For the colonisers, the main "marketable skills" (Loimeier 2009) Islamic education had to offer were literacy in Arabic to train men for positions as civil servants and interpreters, and eventually *fiqh* to create judges in indigenous tribunals or loyal clerics. These subjects were taught alongside 'secular' topics like maths, science, geography and history.

Colonising nations differed in their commitment towards Islamic education reform, which has had a significant impact on the relative abundance of Qur'anic schools in different parts of the Muslim world today. British openness to including religion in public schools meant they systematically incorporated Qur'anic schools and clerics into

the public education system. They also created state schools combining Islamic subjects in Arabic with secular subjects in English. The result was that the classical Qur'anic school system and associated pedagogical methods were undermined (Kobo 2012; Loimeier 2009; Sanneh 1997; Skinner 1976; Starrett 1998; Umar 2001). In contrast, the French in AOF hardly integrated Islam into the state system due to their commitment to *laïcité* and theory of *Islam noir*. In Senegal, Mauritania and Mali they experimented with hybrid schools or *médersas* teaching Arabic, Islamic sciences and secular subjects in French to form a pro-colonial clerisy, but gave up the idea by the 1930s deciding that teaching black populations Islam was misguided and could destabilise society (Brenner 2000, p.43; Harrison 1988, p.109). The French administration abandoned its initial attempts at control, and ironically this *laissez-faire* policy was one reason why the Qur'anic school system survived longer in francophone West Africa than elsewhere in the Muslim world (Ware 2014, p.202).

Functionalisation of Islam and low valorisation of Qur'anic schools came not only from colonial actors. Many Muslims exposed to European schools also questioned classical Islamic pedagogy. While Muslims throughout the world developed similar critiques based on their personal experiences (Kobo 2012; Loimeier 2003) this orientation was crystallised into a movement in the late 19th century by scholars such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in British India, whose ideas were elaborated by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida in Cairo. For them, Islam was threatened by European domination because Muslims had abandoned correct practice and corrupted it with unorthodox elements. Their solution was to return to Islam as practiced by the *Salaf* or rightly guided Companions of the Prophet, from which the movement became associated with the label 'Salafism' (Lauzière 2010). Reviving the 'true' form of Islam involved purging it of *bid'a* or unlawful innovations. The Salafis borrowed the European classification of practices reflective of mystic or esoteric forms of Islam, including fabrication of amulets and the prayer economy, as superstition. They saw the veneration of Sufi *shaykhs* as excessive and equated it with polytheism (*shirk*) (Dilley 2004a). The challenge against Sufism was political as well as theological, as reformers disagreed with the monopoly clerics held over Islamic knowledge, and the religious and social power it conferred. It should be noted that 18th and 19th century West African Sufi jihadist reformist movements (Brenner 1987; Kaba 1974; Robinson 1985), including of Cheikh Umar Tall (Dilley 2004a), included critiques of certain esoteric practices, and

rationalisation of advanced Islamic education had taken place in the Medieval period (Berkey 2006). However, Salafi ideology marked a radical shift in its adoption of an Islamised version of European constructions of modernity and greater objectification of Islamic discourse (Brenner 1993; Hefner 2006; Kobo 2012).

The Salafis derided pedagogies characteristic of the classical education system - including imitation, value accorded to memorisation, and close teacher-student relationships - as the routes through which innovation entered Islamic practice (Launay n.d., p.11). 'Modernising' Islamic education and creating a standardized school system became a key element of their strategy for social transformation, and to reconcile Islamic values with capitalism and skills for formal employment (Tripp 2006). The content of their schools retained memorisation of the Qur'an, Arabic grammar, Islamic sciences and moral education, but was grounded in a paradigm which prioritised abstract discursive knowledge. Pedagogy resembled the form of colonial schools with classrooms, blackboards, desks, standardised examinations and depersonalised learning. Moral education was considered as best achieved not through imitation, or amassing *baraka* (through Qur'anic memorisation or work for the cleric) which acts directly upon the heart, but by acquiring discursive knowledge through the mind which then applies the lessons to the body (Ware 2014, p.67). Reformers saw the Qur'anic text as representing self-evident, objective facts, in contrast to classically trained clerics for whom content was more opaque, truths to be contemplated rather than hard facts. From the reformists' perspective, understanding the meaning of the Qur'an lay in its literal meaning, and Arabic grammar and literacy became the most highly valued skills and knowledge to be acquired (Ware & Launay 2009). While reformed Islamic schools usually had more religious content than state hybrid schools, they also sometimes taught secular subjects and European languages for their economic utility (Loimeier 2009; Meunier 1995). Access to such schools was democratised, including to women, leading to a "fragmentation of sacred authority" (Eickelman & Piscatori 1996, p.70) whereby these "new Muslim intellectuals" (Eickelman & Piscatori 1996, p.40) destabilised the monopoly of interpretation held by the male clerical elite in order to engender new social relationships (Dilley 2004a; Gomez-Perez 1997).

Such philosophies and school models spread quickly in the early 20th century as Salafi doctrine was appropriated by the Saudi royal family via cleric Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. It

became a much stricter creed, with narrower definitions of *bid'a*, and rejection of all esoteric understandings of Islam and Sufi practice (Launay & Soares 1999, p.511) – although many acts they labelled as innovations, such as imbibing liquid derived from handwritten Qur'anic texts, were actually practised by the *Salaf* (Ware 2014, pp.62–63). Al-Azhar University in Cairo, restructured alongside functionalised, modernised lines in the late 19th century, reflected this doctrine and became a popular destination for students from north and Sub-Saharan Africa. These arabophone intellectuals – *arabisants* in French - then spread reform ideologies back in their home countries (Kaba 1974).

However, the degree to which reformed Islamic schools replaced the Qur'anic schools depended on colonial attitudes towards Salafi-inspired groups and modernist Islamic education. The British in West Africa, Egypt and Zanzibar enabled Muslim reformists to create new schools similar to European models (Fisher 1961; Reichmuth 1993; Starrett 1998).¹⁶ In north Africa, Salafi ideology also implanted rapidly, and Qur'anic schools in Morocco and Algeria had declined by the 1930s (Loimeier 2003, p.243; Eickelman 1985 cited in Ware 2014, p.202). However, the French in West Africa developed a powerful paranoia against 'Arab Islam' and what they saw as the 'Wahhabi threat' to *Islam noir*. Until the 1940s, press reflecting Salafi or Wahhabi thought was banned, pilgrimage to the Hijaz curtailed, and reformist groups violently oppressed (Triaud 1997b). Ideologies of modernist Islamic reform only spread to AOF in the 1930s by students returning from study in the Hijaz, Middle East and the Maghreb (Loimeier 2000).

One of the first Senegalese *arabisants* was El Hajj Mahmud Ba from the eastern Futa Tooro. Exposed to reformist ideology and pedagogies while on *hajj* in the 1930s, he opened a school named Al-Falah in his village in 1941. He taught Arabic grammar alongside Qur'anic memorization, using a blackboard, within a weekly timetable. From a *fulbe* pastoralist family, he argued that "tribal and professional considerations" be abandoned in school provision, implicitly critiquing the *toorodo* exclusion of other categories (Dilley 2004b, p.203). Within ten years, graduates had created sixty similar schools in Senegal, Mauritania and Mali. Young men of lower social status were more

¹⁶ See, however, the exception that reformist Muslims in Kenya, Uganda and mainland Tanzania were never able to mount an effective combined offensive against Christian missions (Loimeier 2003).

receptive to Ba's reformist agenda, as were rich merchants who desired Arabic literacy for accounting and increasing their religious practice (M. M. Kane 1997, p.461).

However, in the 1950s, the colonial administration and *toorodo* clerics allied to oppose such reformists, as national political interests among the former, and local grievances among the latter, coincided. They allied to vilify Mahmud Ba as a dangerous extremist. The state prevented Ba from opening new schools, and in the 1960s he went into quasi-exile in Cameroon (M. M. Kane 1997, pp.456–462). Hence, in contrast to many other parts of the Islamic world where Qur'anic schools declined during the colonial period (Berkey 2006), French policy enabled the clerics, and Sufi orders in Senegal especially, to adapt comfortably to colonial rule, and the Qur'anic schools thrived in comparison to schools of Salafi-inspired reformist associations (Loimeier 2000; 2003).

It was not only Salafi or Wahhabi reformers who innovated; clerics and Sufi leaders also reformed their pedagogy. They still valued long-term memorisation of the Qur'an and live-in study with classical pedagogies for acquisition of *baraka* and moral education. However, they accepted the necessity to incorporate discursive forms of knowledge into Qur'anic schools at earlier stages of instruction, teaching Arabic literacy and Islamic sciences, and even European languages and secular subjects (Clarke 1988; Mbacké 2005; Seeseman 2011). In 1937, Shaykh Ibrahima Niasse, founder of the Niassiyya Tijaniyya, even requested that the French administration provide Islamic schools teaching the Qur'an, Arabic and manual skills, although no action in this direction was ever taken (Harrison 1988, pp.190–191). These clerics shared in the ideological shift which redefined the relationship between religious knowledge and personhood more broadly than the classical Qur'anic schools, opening access beyond the sons of the male clerical elite to girls, and artisan and former captive lineages (Klein 1998; Loimeier 2003). Indeed, Salafi-inspired reformers and Sufis were rarely as separate as some scholarship makes out – a dialogue which continued after independence (Otayek & Soares 2007).

In West Africa, Islamic schools placing high value on literacy, and especially those which integrated secular subjects and European languages, were popular among fathers educated in the colonial schools, and the young arabophone intellectuals who disagreed with the authority of the clerical elite and wished to reconcile their religion with

ideologies of modernity (Kaba 1974; M. M. Kane 1997; Kobo 2012; Launay 2007; Loimeier 2000; Masquelier 2001). These schools also appealed to the clerical elite, including leaders of Sufi orders, who sent their sons because they were attracted to the new pedagogies and wished to improve their own practice, but still within an esoteric or Sufi paradigm (O. O. Kane 1997a; Ware 2014, pp.224–227).

2.4 Schools in Senegal after independence: 1960 – 2014

African anti-colonial nationalist movements demanded mass public school systems, and after independence states rolled out school systems inherited from the colonial period (Samoff & Carroll 2007). In Senegal, pupils still follow the French system (although it was altered in France in 1989), officially beginning primary school at age seven, continuing for six years (grades CI, CP, C1, C2, CM1 and CM2). Pupils are awarded the *Certificat de Fin d'Etudes Elementaires* (CFEE) upon successful completion. Lower secondary school, or *collège*, lasts for four years (grades 6ème, 5ème, 4ème and 3ème), marked by award of the *Brevet de Fins d'Etudes Moyennes* (BFEM) diploma. Upper secondary school or *lycée* consists of three grades (2ème, 1er, Terminal) culminating in award of the baccalaureate. During the 1960s, parental demand for school soared as they perceived high economic returns (Gérard 2001, p.64), and the state and UN agencies invested significantly (M. Kane 1972). However, these systems were never suited to mass education (Ki-Zerbo 1990). In Senegal, schools had low cultural relevance and maintained a secular curriculum despite integration of Arabic as a foreign language in the 1960s. The system maintained a hierarchical structure to create an overpaid civil service; urban bias in school provision; gender disparities in enrolment; and under-investment at higher levels meaning few who enrolled in primary would ever benefit from formal employment (Balans 1972; Capurro 1972; M. Kane 1972; Obichere 1972). Schools stimulated migration from rural areas like the Futa Tooro as graduates undervalued locally-relevant forms of knowledge and considered agriculture low prestige (Schmitz 1994, p.426). The political elite saw no need to reform the school system which had conferred them their advantage (Sylla 1985; 1991).

Across the continent, belief in economic utility of school faltered in the 1970s as *lycée* and university graduates failed to obtain formal sector jobs. Young male graduates were unable to accede to power promised by the state, and were still marginalised in the

gerontocracies that controlled social life especially in rural areas (Argenti 2002; Herrera 2006). They faced prolonged periods of ‘waithood’ (Honwana 2012, pp.22–27) where social markers of transition from childhood to adulthood including marriage, establishing a household, and having a voice in the community, were indefinitely delayed. Throughout Africa, disillusioned *lycée* and university students led strikes from the 1970s, forcing governments to make schools more relevant (Bianchini 2004; Bratton & Van de Walle 1992; Lange & Martin 1995; Nkinyangi 1991; Silvia & Caffentzis 2000). In 1981, Senegal’s second president Abdou Diouf organised the first *Etats Généraux de l’Education et de la Formation* (EGEF) to formulate more relevant education, including integrating religious instruction as the system was still secular (Sylla 1991). However, these good intentions were undermined by economic crisis and structural adjustment forcing withdrawal of funding from the education sector. Throughout Africa, the 1980s were marked by a decline in enrolment and growing educational inequality (Henaff 2003; Lange 2003a; Lange & Martin 1995).

The 1990s marked a further shift in African schooling politics. After the global conference on EFA, international donors granted more aid for education. However, despite the progressive rhetoric of the declaration to provide education of quality as defined by people themselves, various donors dominated policy and emphasised market liberalism and retreat of the state (Lange 2003a, p.147). In Senegal, sectoral plans were developed with the World Bank and IMF, namely the *Programme Décennal de l’Education et de la Formation* (PDEF) in 2000, to increase primary school enrolment and gender parity in line with the MDGs. In 2012, enrolment rates of boys and girls reached 80% and 87% in primary, 55% and 55% in *collège*, and 29% and 23% in *lycée* (Pôle de Dakar 2013). However, measures taken focused on quantity, access and enrolment in primary, over quality or investment in higher levels. To reduce government spending, additional categories of teachers were created, who are trained for only a few months before learning in-service, and paid half a fully-trained teacher’s salary. *Volontaires* with the BFEM *collège* diploma teach in primary, and *vacataires* with the baccalaureate teach in *collège* or *lycée*. The low salaries of such teachers have led to repeated union strikes throughout the 2000s (Barro 2009).

Although more children from disadvantaged backgrounds attend primary school, rural-urban differences exist in quality and achievement (Montgomery & Hewett 2005), and

rural schools receive less material support and more under-qualified *volontaire/vacataire* teachers (Lewandowski 2011, p.45). Although more *collèges* were built in the 2000s, the proportion of the education budget accorded to secondary schooling has fallen. Scholarships for *lycée* and university students have been reduced, and 40% of *lycée* students come from the richest quintile of the population (Barro 2009, p.37). Despite the rhetoric that schooling confers economic benefits the problem of educated unemployment is entrenched in Senegal (Cruise O'Brien 1996; Dia 2007). Jobs which require school diplomas and pay well are scarce: 100,000 youth migrate internally each year to cities like Dakar, where only 2000 find steady work (Tandian 2005, p.237). Only 5% of the population works in the formal sector, and most have a university degree (Barro 2009, p.23). Increasingly, the only salaried options available for school graduates lacking university degrees are as *volontaire/vacataire* teachers. Half of teaching jobs are of this type (UNESCO 2014, p.257). These jobs are underpaid (starting at 50,000CFA a month or £56, less than half of a modest household's monthly expenses) and low prestige, yet competition for them (30,000 applicants for 1200 places in 1995) reflects how the teaching corps is a route out of unemployment among youth with diplomas (Barro 2009, p.23).

Given the secular nature of the state schools, to meet popular demand for religious education the private Islamic school sector in West Africa proliferated after independence. During the 1970s, multilateral Islamic donors, NGOs and Arab states – especially Saudi Arabia – provided aid to build schools and fund scholarships to Arab universities (O. O. Kane 1997a; Kobo 2012; Loimeier 2003; Schulze 1993; Zarour 1989). Liberalisation of public services under structural adjustment, combined with pressure to meet EFA, encouraged such non-state actors to provide education (Kaag, 2008, 2009; Otayek, 2003; Otayek & Soares, 2007). In Senegal, Arab funding helped two important Islamic reformist associations to emerge. The Al-Falah movement started by Haalpulaar Mahmud Ba in the 1940s became an official association in 1971; and the *Jama'at 'Ibad ar-Rahman* (JIR), or Society of the Servants of the Merciful, was founded in 1979 (Loimeier 2000, pp.178, 182). Al-Falah and JIR developed Franco-Arab schools, including to support students who completed Qur'anic memorisation (Loimeier 2000, p.180). By the late '80s, they had opened over three hundred primary and secondary schools in over twenty areas in Senegal, although they are concentrated mainly in Dakar (Ware 2009, p.34). Private Islamic schools charge from 10,000 to

50,000CFA a month (between £11 and £55 – the monthly salary of a maid or labourer). Although reformists of Salafi orientation emphasise lower participation of women in economic activities, and stricter norms of gender segregation than is customary in Senegal (Augis 2013; Dilley 2004b, p.203), they propose more roles for women as teachers and preachers (Janson 2008; Schulz 2008).

Leaders of the Niassiyya, Malikiyya and Muridiyya Sufi orders also created Arabo-Islamic institutes using Western-style classrooms, teaching methods, and study of Islamic scripture alongside Qur’anic memorisation, in the holy cities of the peanut basin from the 1950s onwards (Cruise O’Brien 1988a; 1988b; Loimeier 1998; Ware 2014, pp.224–226). The orders and Medina Gounass continued to teach non-*toorodo* categories (Coulon 1975, pp.76–77; Dilley 2004b, pp.206–211). The Niassiyya in particular opened access to Islamic schools and mystical knowledge through Sufi practice or *tarbiya* to women (Hill 2010; Seeseman 2011, pp.164–170). While such trends are slowly permeating into the Futa Tooro (Jourde 2012), Islamic education for girls and non-*toorodo* men is more visible in urban areas and the peanut basin. While non-*toorodo* clerics and imams exist in the Futa Tooro, they often live in villages with no *toorodo* inhabitants or endure having their authority challenged by *toorobe* (Coulon 1975, p.33; Schmitz 1994, p.442). Indeed, as Schmitz notes, for *ñeeñbe* and *gallunkoobe* in the Futa Tooro “emancipation through piety” or Islamic education typically only succeeds away from villages of origin (2009, p.106).

Ordinary clerics also adapted their Qur’anic schools to deal with economic change and shifting demand. Following agricultural decline in the 1970s, rural exodus to cities included impoverished clerics travelling with their students. Ineligible for government subsidies as they do not teach French (Ware 2004a, p.276), clerics adjusted to urban conditions by placing more emphasis on students’ alms-seeking, engaging more in the prayer economy, or charging fees. Many urban Qur’anic schools today are day schools teaching very young children of both sexes, or school pupils during the holidays. The majority are *internat* or boarding schools, and teach memorisation of the Qur’an in return for monthly tuition of 15,000-25,000 CFA (£17-28, the monthly salary of a maid or manual labourer) (Villalón & Bodian 2012, p.15). Even in rural areas where agricultural labour and begging often still complement memorisation of the Qur’an, clerics are integrating literacy into teaching earlier. In cities and the peanut basin with a

strong history of Arabo-Islamic and Franco-Arab schools, many clerics have had an educational trajectory combining Qur'anic schools with these other types (Ware 2014, pp.77–78). The *daaras* are not quantified although the Ministry of Education states that doing so is a priority (2009, p.6). An approximate figure given to me by the director of UNICEF Senegal is 15,000 Qur'anic schools – twice the number of state primary schools (8000). In the late '90s, the number of children attending *daaras* was estimated as being between 600,000 and 1 million (Charlier 2002, p.100)¹⁷ – the current primary-school-aged population is 2.2 million (Pôle de Dakar 2013) – although these statistics are questionable and do not differentiate between full and part-time students.

After independence, the Senegalese government continued trying to control and instrumentalise Islamic education. By the 1970s, colonial stereotypes criticising begging, and framing Qur'anic students or *talibés* as a public nuisance and lacking career possibilities, became widespread in urban areas (Ware 2004a, pp.291–292), reflecting an urban-rural divide in education evaluations. The 1990s saw the internationalisation of the *talibé* 'problem' and more explicit state attacks on clerics and *daaras*. Following ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, in 1992 UNICEF supported the state to offer funds to clerics to end begging and corporal punishment. Many NGOs got involved providing funds to 'modernise' the Qur'anic schools. Official recognition was granted to CFEE and BFEM diplomas awarded in the private Franco-Arab schools; and scholarships were provided for students to study abroad in Arabic-speaking countries. These moves served the state's interests by: reducing its education budget; promoting a new category of Muslim teacher – the *ustaas*, from the Arabic, *ustadh* – to co-opt private Islamic school graduates who otherwise had few career options and could have started an over-educated and under-employed militant movement (Ware 2004a, p.290); and indirectly weakening the popularity of the Qur'anic schools, and by extension, clerical influence (Loimeier 2000, pp.183–184).

¹⁷ Charlier (2002, p.100) states: "The number of children taught at *daaras* is estimated at between 600,000 and one million by local sources. This is but an approximation essentially because *daaras* are not surveyed and are not obliged to provide statistics to any authority, which means a distinction cannot be made between those who take full care of children and those which are active only outside of formal school hours. The often-cited figure of 800,000 children must have been obtained by subtracting the number of children attending [primary] school in 1998-1999 from the total number of children of [primary] school age that same year." (my translation from French). Even these statistics are problematic as Charlier provides no clear identification of the "local sources" or population statistics to which he refers.

The latest permutation of functionalisation of Islamic education has taken place in the context of increasing primary school enrolment to meet EFA. Most independent francophone West African governments remained committed to *laïcité*, and have only created state Islamic schools in the past fifteen years (Villalón & Bodian 2012). In Senegal, reforms began in 2002 and consist of three elements: adding optional religious studies classes into the existing primary school curriculum; establishing roughly four hundred Franco-Arab primary schools, with official recognition granted to existing private Franco-Arab schools which adopt a state-approved bilingual curriculum; and creation of eighty “modernised” Qur’anic schools teaching a curriculum in national languages, Arabic, French, and professional skills (UNICEF 2009; Villalón & Bodian 2012, p.7). More recently, the government has announced further plans to modernise the existing *daaras* by requiring that they teach a common curriculum of three years of Qur’anic memorisation, followed by Qur’an combined with the primary school syllabus (MEN 2015). The state makes explicit that these reforms are intended to meet popular demand for Islamic education, as well as being a strategy to increase enrolment statistics to meet EFA goals by ‘capturing’ pupils currently attending Islamic schools (Lewandowski 2011, p.52).

There is limited evidence that these reforms relating to Franco-Arab schools or *daaras* have affected education provision in St Louis or Matam, the regions equivalent to the Futa Tooro. The proposed “modern” Qur’anic schools do not yet exist. Aside from Dakar, the new Franco-Arab schools are in the regions of Kaolack, Diourbel and Louga, and while they do have very low primary enrolment rates, observers have criticised the state for strategically placing schools to pander to influential Sufi leaders based there (Mbow 2008, p.8). With the exception of one state Franco-Arab school in the town of St Louis, the proposed schools are not located in regions equivalent to the Futa Tooro, although parents there also demand accessible Islamic schools beyond the Qur’anic schools.

There is no research on the reactions of Haalpulaar people – whether clerics, parents or students - to the reforms. The limited research on popular reactions in Senegal more widely shows divergent opinions. For instance, members of JIR and Al-Falah approve (Villalón & Bodian 2012, pp.27–28), as they share the government’s preference for

abstract Islamic knowledge taught through objectified texts over memorisation of the Qur'an and personalised pedagogy of the Qur'anic school. They would also benefit from state-approved curricula, for employment opportunities in the public sector. In comparison, members of the Muridiyya order are opposed to bilingual curricula for their Arabo-Islamic schools, arguing that there is too much emphasis on French, as well as being suspicious of the threat of state control (ibid., pp.29-30). Clerics of the National Federation of Qur'anic School Associations in Senegal¹⁸ object to the state's terminology of "modernising" the *daaras*, its not collaborating with them to elaborate the plans, and placing too great an emphasis on non-Islamic subjects with some categorically opposing that French be taught in *daaras* (Abdourahman 2015; Balde 2015; Lo 2015; SeneWebNews 2015a; 2015b). A pertinent critique of the state's most recent proposed curriculum for the *daaras* is that it seeks to harmonise the *daaras* with existing legislation designed for private schools conforming to a Western school model, rather than being elaborated with clerics to respond to the entirely different mode of functioning of the Qur'anic schools (Abdourahman 2015).

2.5 Understanding contemporary educational choices

The plurality in education provision in Africa and the wider Islamic world today coincides with a broad range of education preferences and choices, and many of these trends can also be observed in Senegal. Many parents still see economic value in state schools despite high levels of graduate unemployment. In Mali (Brenner 2000, pp.187–188) and Niger (Meunier 1995, p.623), these parents tend to be from privileged social classes and have resources to ensure their children obtain diplomas and succeed in the formal sector. Indeed, Lewandowski (2011, p.49) finds that in Dakar, middle-class families (civil servants, merchants, NGO employees) and upper-class parents (high-ranking civil servants, staff of INGOs) prefer secular and Catholic private schools, or state schools supplemented by extra tuition.

Many members of the middle and lower-middle classes have experienced declining opportunities for formal sector employment, but still perceive material utility of status or networks from state schools. In parts of Côte d'Ivoire (Proteau 1995), Mali (Kail

¹⁸ In French: *Fédération Nationale des Associations d'Ecoles Coraniques du Sénégal (FNAECS)*.

1999, cited in Gérard 2001, p.79), Burkina Faso (Yaro 1995) and India (Jeffrey et al. 2004) the definition of the ‘educated person’ associated with at least primary schooling has become so ubiquitous as to be “institutionalised” (Gérard 2001, p.64) and a prerequisite for social integration. In Mali (Sankara 1996, cited in Gérard 2001, p.69) and Bangladesh (Heissler 2011, p.741) parents value school for inserting their children into networks to help find work rather than for knowledge, and in Tanzania (Bonini 1995, p.589), India (Froerer 2011, p.700) and Morocco (Naji 2012, p.380) for basic numeracy and literacy rather than diplomas. Parental investment in girls’ schooling was until the 1980s and even 1990s low because it presented minimal material value – girls lost the valued skills associated with domestic work, and schooled girls were considered disobedient and hence unattractive wives. Yet, female enrolment has increased, especially as aspiring parents consider primary school useful given that husbands increasingly value wives with basic education, either for raising children or to work given men’s weakened earning power after economic crises, as in Morocco (Naji 2012, p.380), Bangladesh (Heissler 2011, p.737) India (Froerer 2011, p.701) and Egypt (Singerman 1995, p.164, cited in Starrett 1998, p.178).

However, although the popularity of Islamic schools is intimately linked to perceptions of intrinsic benefits, material factors are also influential. The crisis of unemployed state school graduates has increased the popularity of private Islamic schools teaching official languages and secular subjects alongside religion. Cheaper than investment in the public system to university level, these schools appeal to middle or lower-middle-class Muslim parents from Mali (Brenner 2000, pp.214–217; Gérard 1997, p.228), the Middle East (Adely & Starrett 2011, p.359; Marsden & Retsikas 2013, p.20) and Indian subcontinent (Bano 2012b, pp.102, 116; Rao & Hossain 2011, p.625), who would usually have chosen state schools for their sons but not Qur’anic schools, for moral education and economic utility. Indeed, in contexts such as Bangladesh (Rao & Hossain 2011, p.624) these schools are perceived as better suited to economic realities than state schools. In India (Jeffery & Jeffery 2004), Pakistan (Bano 2012b, pp.136–142), Bangladesh (Rao & Hossain 2011, p.631) and Mali (Brenner 2000, p.234) these schools are also popular among middle-class parents for their daughters, to provide possible income-generating skills, while teaching Islamic gender norms considered attractive to prospective husbands, which offset the perceived negative influence of ‘Western’ culture conveyed in secular schools and media.

Schools teaching Arabic grammar and Islamic sciences are growing in popularity among parents, including the clerical elite, who would otherwise have chosen a Qur'anic school. They value a predominantly religious education, including for the possibility of working as an Arabic teacher or imam, and do not want to compromise on memorisation of the Qur'an. In Pakistan (Bano 2012b Chapter 5), Niger (Meunier 1995, p.624) and Senegal (Ware 2004a, p.308), such Islamic schools are popular among middle-class and affluent parents – including the leaders of Senegalese Sufi orders - who can afford the fees, and wish to practice their faith and reaffirm their Muslim identity. Evidence from Mali and Senegal shows that perceived benefits of different Islamic schools are influenced by context-specific material returns, including whether the state recognises private Islamic school diplomas (Brenner 2000, p.16; Loimeier 2000, p.176) or if schools are linked to networks of Wahhabi traders or reformist associations with access to Islamic development funds (Amselle 1992; Roy 2012, p.101; Warms 1992). Perry (2004, pp.61–62) found that Wolof farmers in the peanut basin of Senegal prefer local Arabo-Islamic day schools over Qur'anic schools as they do not lose their children's labour, and girls have access. They no longer consider the hardship entailed in Qur'anic school as necessary for a moral education.

In parts of West Africa, the popularity of live-in Qur'anic school education has fallen relative to private Islamic schools (Gandolfi 2003, p.268; Hoechner 2011, p.6), hence the stereotype described in the previous chapter that live-in Qur'anic schools are for poor parents who cannot afford other options. This is true of some contexts, as the shift to market economies and encroachment of neoliberal ideology has provoked a commodification of education. Long-term exchange relationships in return for Islamic knowledge or clerics' esoteric services have shifted towards payment of fixed fees, leading to new hierarchies of access of who can afford to pay (Butler 2006; Soares 2005).

However, the popularity of Qur'anic schools remains high elsewhere, and its correlation with poverty is not universal (Einarsdóttir et al. 2010, p.61; Kielland & Gaye 2010, p.101; Meunier 1995, p.628). Evidence from Pakistan (Bano 2012b, p.116) shows that, as fully memorising the Qur'an requires significant investment of time and loss of a child's labour, the poorest are less likely to succeed. In India, the religious professions

of imam or teacher are highly valued, not a last economic resort (Jeffrey et al. 2008, pp.137–138). In Senegal, the popularity of Qur’anic schools has been documented among middle and upper-class parents (Loimeier 2002, p.125). Like other schools, Qur’anic school choice is linked to material returns, including contacts, skills and *baraka* to succeed in trade networks associated with the Muridiyya Sufi order (Bocquier 1996, p.181; Teolis 2009, p.10; Ware 2014, p.245), or in a thriving prayer economy, demand for which can be enhanced during times of crisis, as documented in Nigeria (Last 1988) and Niger (Masquelier 2009, p.61). In Medina Gounass, and Djourbel dominated by the Muridiyya Sufi order, resistance to secular state schools remains among parents (Loimeier 2002, p.125; Villalón & Bodian 2012, p.9). In Dakar, lower-income parents (petty traders, shopkeepers, seasonal workers, manual labourers, unemployed) also prefer the Qur’anic schools followed by apprenticeships, seeing little economic value in state schools, and social benefits of Islamic education (Lewandowski 2011, pp.49–50).

Clear patterns of combining different forms of schooling can also be observed, including where parents send one child to state school, another to Qur’anic school, and a third to private Islamic school, in order that benefits of each, whether blessing, knowledge, status, or income, be shared among everyone. Contrary to individual-actor analyses of costs and benefits embedded within the EFA paradigm, this collectivist logic observed in locations as diverse as Mali (Gérard 1997), Pakistan (Andrabi et al. 2006, p.459) and Senegal (Kielland & Gaye 2010, p.70) sees the education of *one* or *some* as being *for the good of all* (Lange 2003a, p.160). Studies from Benin (Amadou & Koto Sero 2001 cited in Thorsen 2006, p.5) and Senegal (Delap 2009, p.12) show parents sending children to different schools throughout their educational careers, such as combining Qur’anic school with some French literacy or apprenticeships, to enhance their range of skills and income prospects. These strategies some scholars have defined as adaptive “multiskilling” for “occupational multiplicity” (Froerer & Portisch 2012, p.339). The pattern of attending Qur’anic schools as day students alongside state schools, which first developed during the colonial period, has spread beyond the elite to parents around the Islamic world, including Morocco, Yemen and Nigeria (Boyle 2006, pp.483–484). These parents often state that memorising the Qur’an helps children’s faculties of memory, concentration and literacy, useful for state schooling afterwards (Boyle 2006, p.495).

The appeal of different schools among young people themselves is also mediated by context-specific evaluations of their value. The attraction among some young Muslim men to Islamic knowledge – whether Arabic literacy and textual analysis within ‘reformist’ paradigms from the Gambia (Janson 2010), Côte d’Ivoire (LeBlanc 1999) and Cameroon (Holtedahl & Djingui 1994), or mystic knowledge within Senegalese Sufi orders (Jourde 2012) – can coincide with material status value, enabling them to critique the monopoly elders have over religious knowledge and hence gerontocratic authority.¹⁹ In Mali, choosing an Islamic school can be an explicit rejection of secular state school and thus a mark of distinction for frustrated male youth (Gérard 2001, pp.72–73). In Guinea Bissau, some boys wish to attend Qur’anic schools in Dakar for the opportunity to travel as much as to learn the Qur’an (Einarsdóttir et al. 2010, p.41). Young women have embraced Islamic education within reformist ‘piety movements’ in Mali (Schulz 2008), Pakistan (Bano 2012b Chapter 6), Bangladesh (Huq 2008), Egypt (Mahmood 2005) and Niger (Masquelier 2009), but also within the Niassiyya Sufi order in Senegal (Hill 2010), for personal spiritual benefits which can also confer them respect and status in their communities, and sometimes the ability to challenge gerontocratic and patriarchal family structures. The availability of new media, as well as greater availability of print media, has also expanded access to Islamic knowledge outside of formal education, while simultaneously creating new hierarchies (Hirschkind 2006; Schulz 2006; Sounaye 2014). Using media to study informally applies to pupils in state schools learning Islamic knowledge, but equally to students of Qur’anic schools who supplement their education with additional skills (Hoechner 2011, p.12).

Decision-making in Medina Diallobé today has to be considered in the context of these patterns observed in the wider Islamic world, but also needs to be situated in the specific socioeconomic and political context of the Futa Tooro. A significant characteristic of this region is its status as an area with the highest levels of male out-migration in Senegal (Dia 2007, p.2). Under colonisation, Haalpulaar men migrated seasonally to towns or the peanut basin to earn cash, returning to their villages to cultivate (Diop 1965; Schmitz 2006; Wane 1969). Droughts from the 1950s made this

¹⁹ See, however, Gomez-Perez, LeBlanc and Savadogo’s argument that the focus on intergenerational conflict is over-simplistic and masks the frequent collaboration between young men and established elders in religious activities such as proselytization, as in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire (2009).

pattern untenable, and men increasingly migrated long-term, mainly to Dakar, but also to central African countries as '*diamantaires*' in the illicit diamond trade (Bredeloup 1993). Migration from the Futa Tooro increased during the 1960s and '70s following droughts and food insecurity. From the 1990s, the USA and southern European countries became important additional destinations of Haalpulaar migration (Tandian 2005; Touré 2001). By the 2000s, 30-50% of active males from the river valley area were absent, and while in the 1970s remittances contributed 8% of household budgets (Touré 2001, p.236), today it is more like 80% (Daum 1993, p.13 cited in Tandian 2005, p.244).

Customary professions associated with social categories have long been in decline, yet the hierarchy remains (N'Gaïde 2003) through the Haalpulaar aristocracy's capture of new sources of economic and political power and maintenance of patronage relationships, and perpetuation of the essentialist "indigenous discourse of difference" (Dilley 2000, p.154). *Toorobe* and other privileged freeborn have always migrated more easily, given their inherited wealth (DuPire 1970, p.439). Young male migrants of different categories shared rooms together and, like a microcosm of village life, reproduced hierarchical relationships (Diop 1965, pp.155–162; Schmitz 1994, p.424). The mixture of patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic forms of domination, or neopatrimonialism,²⁰ characteristic of the colonial state was reproduced post-independence. Members of the Haalpulaar aristocracy with posts as indigenous officials under the colonial regime - such as canton chief - were integrated into the independent administration and elected at local level. These local political brokers restricted implementation of egalitarian social policies in the Futa Tooro, including blocking land reforms in the 1960s (Coulon 1975). They co-opted *communautés rurales* or rural councils created in the 1970s to re-distribute land, and cooperatives to manage irrigated rice plots along the Senegal River basin created in the 1980s to increase access of *ñeeño* and *gallunkoodo* families to land (Dilley 2004b, p.48; Schmitz 1994, pp.426–427). Migration was accompanied by creation of village development associations (VDAs), where migrants pooled savings to invest in local infrastructural projects (Dia 2008; Kane 2001; Quiminal 1991), but were dominated by *toorobe* who thwarted changes that

²⁰ My use of the term neopatrimonialism, drawn from Erdmann and Engel (2007) and Therkildsen (2014), takes into account recent critiques that the term has been used within political science to imply that African states are characterised by solely neopatrimonial logics, when empirical evidence shows they coincide with legal-rational bureaucratic norms (Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan 2014a; 2014b).

might undermine their status (Lavigne-Delville 2000). From the 1990s, with state withdrawal of service provision, the VDAs have increasingly collaborated with NGOs and donors to provide infrastructure in villages (Kane 2001) thus becoming powerful “development brokers” mediating between development actors and local communities (Bierschenk et al. 2000).

Although the original “caste markers” (Beck 2008, p.123) of the Haalpulaar ruling elite have declined - economic wealth tied to agricultural land, and monopoly on customary political positions - the aristocracy appropriated new sources of status through state employment and migration to increase their local political popularity, being elected as mayors of communes following decentralisation from the 1970s (Sall 2001; Lavigne-Delville 2000). The shift of a one-party state to a multi-party democracy in 2000 has not altered *toorodo* dominance. While ostensibly democratic, communes in the Futa Tooro remain dominated by *toorodo* men over forty years of age (Blundo 2000, pp.80–81). While *ñeeñbe* and *gallunkoobe* have entered the national *Assemblée Générale* and civil service since independence, their posts rarely translate into elected posts or increased authority in decision-making at village level. While they can disguise their origins through migration to urban centres, this process is not accompanied by a revalorisation of their category status (Mbow 2000, p.90). *Ñeeñbe* who become professionally successful in Dakar or abroad are still considered by many freeborn as polluting, and marriage with them shunned (Mbacké 2005, p.33; Mbow 2000, p.90). If they have few economic alternatives, *ñeeñbe* and *gallunkoobe* in the Futa Tooro can often perpetuate a submissive identity in order to maintain clientelistic relationships with their former freeborn patrons, thus benefitting materially (N’Gaïde 2003, p.718).

With respect to gender relations, children in the Futa Tooro are socialised into strict roles based on a hierarchical division of labour. Girls learn to cook, clean, look after children, fetch water and firewood, while boys do house repairs, mind livestock, and run errands (O’Neill 2012, pp.167–172). Marriage is obligatory for both genders (Ndiaye & Ayad 2006, p.99) and female virginity strictly monitored (O’Neill 2012). Although marriages used to be arranged by the couple’s parents to strengthen family ties, parental monopoly over choice of spouses has been declining (Teolis 2009, p.17). While girls used to marry around age twelve (Mackintosh 1989, p.48), average age of first marriage among Senegalese women has increased to 18.5 years in 2010, although 16% of girls

are still married by age fifteen (ASND 2012, p.3). Polygyny was widespread prior to Islam, as a sign of male status and advantageous for women to share domestic work with co-spouses (Teolis 2009, pp.36–38). In 2010, 39% of married women in rural areas were in polygamous unions, and average fertility per woman was six births (ASND 2012, pp.4–5), often a strategic decision among poorer families to have surplus labour in times of crisis (Kielland & Gaye 2010, pp.7–8).

Social expectations of men are still tied to their breadwinning role, but rising living costs mean young men can no longer profitably work their family's land or practise the customary profession of their category. Social markers of adulthood, including marriage and establishing a household, are increasingly delayed until men reach their thirties (Mackintosh 1989, p.48). While female status is still earned through being a dutiful and obedient wife and bearing many children (O'Neill 2012, pp.170–171), women have also taken on greater income-generating roles to supplement household budgets. Although creating additional burdens, in some rural contexts female status and bargaining power within households has increased, creating insecurity among some men (Mackintosh 1989, p.171; Perry 2005; Tandian 2005, p.253). While women head local women's associations, and a few are elected as councillors in *communautés rurales* and communes, they are still under-represented in formal political office (Blundo 2000, p.81).

In the contemporary Futa Tooro, male “figures of success” (Dia 2007, pp.3–4) reflect this evolution of routes to status throughout the last century, with implications for evaluations of education. The customary aristocratic titles of village chief and chief of the land still carry symbolic prestige and inherited assets, while *seerembe* lineages of imam and Qur'anic teacher continue to perform vital social functions. The trader, high-ranking civil servant, politician and development broker, roles dominated by *toorobe* although not necessarily of customary political aristocratic lineages, are also associated with wealth and prestige.

Among young men, however, the migrant trumps the lot. Although jobs abroad, even for those with school or university diplomas, are often manual and carry low status locally, the migrants' distance from home overcomes this stigma (see also Heissler 2011, p.738; Rao & Hossain 2012, p.630). Wealth translates into status through

purchase of property, luxury consumer goods, and ostentatious giving at lifecycle celebrations (Dia 2007, p.7). By contrast, the local economy remains stagnant. Indeed, those with greater inherited and accumulated wealth can migrate internationally more easily, which often becomes a strategy for the local elite to maintain its economic, social and political dominance (Azam & Gubert 2005). The aristocracy and/or migrant elite blocks projects which challenge their authority or equilibrate local relationships - like attempts by some VDAs to create income-generating activities for youth (Dia 2007, pp.11–13) and Pulaar literacy projects (Humery 2012). Young men remaining in villages are unemployed, or work in low-prestige, low-paid customary professions, or trades like tailor, shopkeeper, carpenter, mechanic, and petty commerce. Girls and their parents prefer a migrant husband over these young men ‘left behind’, or even teachers and low-paid civil servants (Schmitz 2008, p.10). This creates further incentives to migrate, even among skilled professionals in Dakar, who are among most recent waves of international emigrants (Riccio 2005, pp.102–103). This context has ambiguous implications for school demand among parents and young people. Schooling has been a privileged site of investment by VDAs, whose members advocate in favour of French literacy skills (Fall 2001, p.206). However, although positions in the civil service or NGOs require state school diplomas, becoming a successful migrant does not necessarily.

Despite the wealth of evidence on the social, economic and political realities of the Futa Tooro, there is a dearth of research on educational decision-making. Auriol and Demonsant’s (2012) quantitative analysis of survey data from six villages in the region of Matam is the exception. In these villages, 51% of 7 to 17 year-olds are enrolled in state schools. The authors argue that men of the “high / ruling caste” are more likely to have attended Qur’anic schools and migrated abroad, while the “low caste” invested in state schools. This observation is not particularly helpful given the simplistic and ambiguous distinction between “high / ruling caste” and “low caste” employed as variables. They conclude that “high caste” fathers knew their sons would migrate, so invested in Qur’anic schools to encourage pro-family values among their sons, thus making them more likely to send remittances. However, these conclusions are questionable given analytical flaws in the study, namely the assumption that current observations of migration and remittance trends can be used as ‘evidence’ of historical

parental decision-making patterns. This points to an urgent need for qualitative research to explain current decision-making trends in the Futa Tooro.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter started from the theoretical point developed in Chapter One that constructions of educational value reflect highly context-specific social, economic and political realities. Hence, several key issues emerge from the history of education provision in Senegal provided in this chapter which are relevant to understanding the trajectories of Medina Diallobé inhabitants today. Qur'anic schools valorising moral transformation via imitation and acquisition of *baraka*, through memorisation of the Qur'an and work for the cleric, have existed in Senegal for over a thousand years. The Futa Tooro region has a particularly strong Islamic culture and network of *daaras* for specific historical reasons. In contrast, the state system of mass education dates only from the 19th century, and is still concentrated in urban areas. The *daara* reflected a form of domination as it was an exclusive education only for boys of clerical Muslim families. Nonetheless, its providers had social authority, and its form and content were in line with cultural realities and popular epistemology. The colonial school system therefore reflected a form of domination of an entirely different order: it was designed to create a small male elite who submitted to the colonial state rather than to God, based on an alien language and culture, and denigrated mystic forms of religion as superstition. It was also accompanied by forced conscription and enrolment, attacks on the Qur'anic schools, and associated with other forms of physical and symbolic violence perpetrated under the colonial regime. In turn however, many Muslims were influenced by European models of schooling, criticised the classical Islamic education system on theological and pedagogical grounds, and re-packaged Islam to coincide with the format and curricula of Western-style schools thus widening the criteria for Islamic knowledge acquisition and authority.

All Muslim societies under European colonial rule experienced this evolution of education provision. However, the Senegalese account shows that the relative influence of these different education providers and their respective schools varies between contexts due to specific factors, and cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, compared to

many other Islamic contexts, the network of Qur'anic schools in Senegal has been protected against mass state education and alternative models of private Islamic education advancing a rationalist interpretation of Islam sceptical of esoteric or Sufi practice. This is linked to two key factors whose origins lie in the policies of the French colonial administration. First, under their theory of *Islam noir* the French bolstered the social, economic and political power of the Sufi order leaders, whose power has continued post-independence. Second, they created strictly secular state schools under the model of *laïcité* which have remained secular until recently in many former colonies of AOF. Indeed, public state schools in Senegal continue to be ill-adapted to cultural and economic realities of all but a tiny elite, despite their being transformed into a system of mass education after independence and currently promoted under the MDG agenda. Thus, Qur'anic schools which address popular demand for Islamic education based on memorisation of the Qur'an and acquisition of *baraka* continue to thrive despite criticisms from the state, Western-educated elite, Islamic reformers and NGOs.

This situation of education provision is mirrored by relatively unusual patterns of education demand among parents and young people compared to other Islamic contexts. Certain trends are comparable to other post-colonial Muslim societies. From the colonial period onwards many parents perceived state schools as valuable in the new order. They sought ways to combine Islamic moral education with skills for the formal economy, including sending their children to private, Western-inspired Islamic schools. However, the assumption that these trends of decision-making are universal, and that full-time Qur'anic schooling is unpopular among all but the poorest parents, is a stereotype. In Senegal, preference among parents, including affluent ones, for Qur'anic schools or Arabo-Islamic schools, remains high.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, high evaluations of the intrinsic spiritual or moral value of schools typically coincide with perceived material or economic benefits. To take the Futa Tooro specifically, Qur'anic school education prior to colonisation was embedded in a social hierarchy in which clerics dominated political and economic power, and status and self-worth for men from *toorodó* lineages was based on memorisation of the Qur'an. This ideology has survived today although the Haalpulaar aristocracy have co-opted new sources of income to maintain their status. Hence,

intrinsic value of memorising the Qur'an has, for the elite clerical category of *toorobe*, continued to be supported by material and economic value.

Therefore, in terms of understanding the decisions of contemporary inhabitants of Medina Diallobé, the educational landscape in the Futa Tooro has three main relevant characteristics: a dense network of exclusive Qur'anic schools and associated livelihoods of trade and migration which remain popular for the male *toorodo* elite; relatively low-cost state schools which offer economic and material alternatives to the Qur'anic schools but which are a relatively recent and ambiguous aspect of the educational landscape; there are few accessible Islamic schools teaching Arabic and religious science which offer alternative material and economic opportunities, and are open to girls and non-*toorodo* boys, as they tend to be located elsewhere in Senegal and/or charge high fees.

The trajectories of individual inhabitants of Medina Diallobé reflect this broad backdrop of school provision. However, their preferences – which in turn hint at alternative faith-infused notions of being 'educated' in contrast to the mainstream development models - and concrete decision-making processes, reflect further contextual specificities which can only be understood through ethnographic research. In Chapter Three I therefore describe the process of data collection in Medina Diallobé and the village's main characteristics, to situate the material analysed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3. Situating learning in Medina Diallobé: Methodology, access and context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the political, social, economic and educational context of Medina Diallobé village, and the specific realities which frame the school-related decision-making processes analysed in the following chapters. However, before presenting the *what*, this chapter begins by unpacking *how* I learned about Medina Diallobé, including my methodological stance, processes of relationship-building, moments of insight, and the biases, barriers and challenges I encountered in the field. I spent a total of sixteen months in Senegal. My first visit was a month-long pilot study in October 2010, which I mostly spent in Dakar combined with two short (three to four day) trips to the south and north of the country. I returned to Senegal in February 2011 to commence fieldwork proper, and initially spent six months mainly in Dakar learning Pulaar with a tutor at the ACI Baobab Language School. Between August 2011 and July 2012 I spent nine months in Senegal, namely eight months in Medina Diallobé (divided into four stays of six to ten weeks), interspersed with rest breaks of one to two weeks in Dakar.

3.2 Learning about learning in Medina Diallobé

3.21 *Understanding across epistemologies: Methodological reflections*

Chapter One made the case that the global model of schooling, and assumptions about decision-making, reflect Western-centric value judgements about what constitutes “quality” education. These assumptions are linked to a broader problem central to this thesis: the danger of employing Western-centric frames of reference when studying the realities of people following other epistemologies or cosmologies. Indeed, it is essential not to attribute value judgements to people’s behaviour without empirical evidence (Tomalin 2007, p.28). However, scholars from non-Western cultural backgrounds have shown that Western scientists have tended to analyse other people from within their own perspective and not through the lens of others’ own worldviews, and this has been used to justify colonisation and domination of other peoples (Nakata 2007; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). The legacy of colonial frameworks has permeated into scholarship today,

and alternative ways of knowing and conceptualising knowledge continue to be denigrated within Western academia (Abdi 2008; Brock-Utne 2006; Foley 2003; Varese 2003).

These insights are equally applicable to the study of Muslim societies, with Sub-Saharan Africa a specific case where racist and Orientalist biases intersect (Ware 2014, pp.17–23, 30). Senegalese historian Ousmane Kane (2012, pp.1–3) makes the case that much research on Africa, Islam and Islamic education in Africa, including the work of African intellectuals trained in Western universities working in European languages, has tended to use categories and conceptual systems derived from Western epistemologies. Much contemporary Western academic scholarship still bears the imprint of colonial stereotypes about *Islam noir* or ‘African Islam’ (Otayek & Soares 2007; Seeseman 2011, pp.11–13). This has resulted in widespread binaries constructed between ‘African Islam’, perceived as a syncretic form of religion, and ‘Islam in Africa’ – namely ‘Salafi’, ‘Wahhabi’, or ‘Islamist’ reformist trends, presented as orthodoxy.

In his recent book, *The Walking Qur’an*, on Islamic education in Senegambia, Rudolph Ware (2014, pp.17–23, 30) demonstrates how this construction currently influences many scholars, including Muslims, who judge Qur’anic and Islamic schools along a hierarchy from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’. According to Ware, the Qur’anic school is embedded within a logic which accords high value to oral transmission of knowledge, and the moral transformation of students through imitation, and acquisition of *baraka*. This logic is denigrated in much scholarship as being representative of ‘African Islam’, namely traditional, syncretic, heterodox, locally African, peripheral, and inferior. In contrast, the ‘reformist’ Islamic schools based on European school models are characterised by modernist denigration of mystic forms of religion, and high valorisation of literacy and abstract transmission of textual knowledge. These schools and value-logic are framed with much academic discourse as modern, orthodox, universal, and superior. It is these stereotypes which influence many of the problematic value judgements about Qur’anic schools, by development actors and scholars, described in Chapter One.

Moving beyond these biases is not straightforward, however, although scholars have suggested various methodological strategies. Ousmane Kane argues that to break down

these problematic categorisations, more dialogue is needed between Western-educated sociologists of knowledge and scholars familiar with the pre-colonial Islamic intellectual tradition in West Africa. Engaging with literature written in non-European languages is essential, especially scholarship in Arabic and *adjami* literature in vernacular African languages written in Arabic script, which reflect an “Islamic space of meaning” (Kepel 2000, p.74) structured by Islamic beliefs and practices. While I cannot read Arabic, I have made efforts to engage with the work of both anglophone and francophone academics, including wherever possible West African scholars, with an understanding of this corpus. I have attempted to draw upon the body of literature which constitutes a “post-colonial space of meaning shared by Europhone intellectuals and non-Europhone intellectuals, as well as intellectuals who result from a mixture of the two” (Kane 2012, p.3).

In terms of my own research practice, I have been drawn towards hermeneutics and the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (2001) who proposes a practical framework to theorise what happens when people try and engage in understanding with individuals from different cultures or backgrounds. Gadamer argues that it is impossible to shift entirely from your own background, history, culture, language or worldview, into a different system of beliefs and ways of thinking. It is inevitable that we will interpret the stories people tell us based on our own experiences and prejudices. However, Gadamer argues that it is possible to go beyond our own standpoint. We will never achieve the standpoint of another, but we can arrive at understanding with others in which we meet midway between our old standpoints and theirs, by developing a “horizon”. As Gadamer puts it, “a person who has no horizon is a man who does not see far enough and hence overvalues what is nearest to him” (1975, p.302). Understanding therefore involves not putting one’s views forward and asserting them, but taking part in a process of dialogue, where the other person’s opinions and experiences are taken seriously. Thus, a “fusion of horizons” takes place among the participants in dialogue, as each one’s horizon is broadened by the other’s, and each person is “transformed into a communion in which [they] do not remain what [they] were” (1975, p.378).

Research practice conducive to creating instances of understanding includes constant self-reflection – which can include reading critical literature including written by people from other perspectives, and keeping and re-reading our fieldwork notes - to identify

those biases and remain vigilant about how they influence our thoughts, actions, and interpretations of others' realities (Scott-Villiers 2009, pp.43–55). Dialogue must be based on active listening, with the researcher alternating between speaking and listening, and actively drawing on their conversation partner's statements to open up further questions or lines of clarification (Garrison 1996; Geanellos 1999; Haroutunian-Gordon & Lavery 2011; Purdy 1986).

Finally, empathy, the process of entering the perceptual world of another person (Rogers 1975, p.4) and establishing rapport to gain deeper understanding of their lives, is essential, as many ethnographers have documented (Jackson 1998; Ridler 1996; Wikan 1992). Empathy can be enhanced by shared embodied experience (Gieser 2008). To clarify, based on Bourdieu's observation that "there are a great many things that we understand only with our bodies, at a sub-conscious level without having the words to say them" (1988, p.160), anthropologists (e.g. Ingold 2000) have argued that differences in cultural knowledge are more a matter of variation in skills or perceptions derived through different embodied experiences, than differences in discursive knowledge transmitted through language. Indeed, Jackson argues that learning embodied knowledge is of interest in the ethnographic encounter because "a bodily awareness of the other in oneself [...] assists in bringing into relief a reciprocity of viewpoints" (1989, p.130). The rest of this section unpacks how I applied these principles of dialogue, active listening, empathy and embodied learning in seeking to understand the experiences of Medina Diallobé's inhabitants.

3.22 Building relationships as the basis of dialogue

When in Dakar, most of my informants were academics working at public and private universities, personnel at national and regional INGO offices, employees at the Ministry of Education, and staff of several NGOs working on education or with *talibés*. I was introduced to some of these individuals by contacts at the University of Sussex, but mostly I approached them independently through email or phone to arrange meetings. For the most part, these encounters consisted of one-off interviews in people's places of work. The exception was when I arrived in Dakar in early 2011, as I was hosted for several weeks by a senior official at an important regional INGO office. They invited

me to several dinners and parties, which enabled me to speak with elite development practitioners more informally. It was the viewpoints of these informants in Dakar which demonstrated to me the widespread nature of stereotypes about education and Islam in Senegal that I described in Chapter One.

However, it was with my host family in Medina Diallobé, and wider network of friends I made in the village, that I developed deeper relationships in which I engaged in dialogue. My meeting with my host family was highly serendipitous as during my pilot-study visit to Dakar in 2010, I was introduced to Mamadou Sy, a 40-year-old *toorodo* from a clerical family in the Futa Tooro, as a possible Pulaar teacher. Mamadou invited me to visit his family's village, Medina Diallobé, and although it was not part of my original itinerary as it did not fit my ideas of a suitable field-site based on low female school enrolment and a high density of NGOs, I accepted out of curiosity. Over the three days I spent in Medina Diallobé, I found the surroundings both unexpected and fascinating. The head of Mamadou's family had been a well-respected and well-travelled erudite in Islamic scholarship, and I learned much about his life, and Islamic education and culture in the Futa Tooro.

I was plunged into a setting which seemed worlds removed from the stereotypes of development actors in Dakar, about abusive clerics and suffering *talibés*, and Islam blocking girls' schooling, that I had planned to study. I enjoyed the fact that the presence of NGOs was not immediately obvious, as it was in the south of Senegal where on every street corner sits a hulking four-by-four emblazoned with donor and organisation insignia. I respected the family's devotion to the pursuit of knowledge in both Islamic and state school education. They stated explicitly that the state and Franco-Arab schools failed to meet their educational desires. Their commitment to memorising the Qur'an in *daaras* was not a constraint of poverty but a deliberate choice, independent of – and even in resistance to – the desires of the state and development actors. Acknowledging my biases in retrospect, I was drawn to the fact that I felt that I had encountered “organic intellectuals”, in Gramsci's terms, shaping their own trajectories of development (Hoare & Smith 1971). I asked Mamadou's family if they would mind if I returned to live with them, and they agreed to be my hosts, known in Pulaar as *njatigi*.

Based on fieldwork experience in the Futa Tooro, anthropologist Olivier Kyburz (1994, p.10) argues that a stranger's relationship with their host family or *njatigi* provides the foundation for their integration into the community. A guest is expected to behave appropriately, and any violation of this code reflects badly on the host's reputation. As my relationship with my host family formed the bedrock of connections I built in Medina Diallobé, I did the utmost to behave in ways which made them proud. For instance, as an unmarried woman in my late twenties, my dress and interactions with men were two areas crucial to my maintaining an image of a respectable femininity. O'Neill, who conducted her fieldwork in a much smaller village in the Futa Tooro, describes how she was reprimanded by her host family for being outside the compound and in the company of men after dark (2012, pp.49–50). However, my experience was not as difficult; my host family permitted me to walk home at night from the houses of families I visited. I could spend time with male acquaintances after dark, but I made sure I had discussions in public, such as outside a shop on the main road, or in the yard of their compound with other family members present, to avoid gossip. I think one significant reason my mobility was accepted is because I dressed according to my host family's locally high standards of modesty, always wearing a long dress with sleeves, wraparound skirt, headscarf, and outer shawl covering my arms.

However, I found barriers to my interactions based on social category harder to negotiate than gender. Haalpulaar children are socialised to spend time with those of the same category (N'Gaïde 2003), and among the freeborn there are taboos against associating with *ñeeñbe*. Some members of my host family tried to stop me spending time outside of the extended family, and several criticised my seeing *waylube* blacksmith families. They warned me that *baylo* people are witches and that I should never eat with them. Once I stubbornly kept a date to dine at a *baylo* friend's house despite warnings it was "dangerous", and a few days later when I suffered a bout of diarrhoea I received several smug "I-told-you-so" remarks, my ailments taken as proof of *waylube* witchcraft. Although I did my best to resist these injunctions, I had to avoid offending my host family, and as a result spent more time overall with *toorobe*. My data therefore reflects a bias towards their stories. However, these experiences also enabled me to better understand social category socialisation processes. The importance of such informal learning for understanding gendered patterns of Islamic education is considered in depth in Chapter Four.

I wanted to develop relationships beyond my host family for a broader understanding of perspectives among Medina Diallobé inhabitants. I hoped to interview people from families of different social categories, and speak with several members separately to gain insight into divergent realities (Lewis 2008), including conflicts of interest, and gender or generational differences (Song 1998). I originally intended to identify families and systematically interview both parents and a son and daughter from each – a methodology employed by Arnot and Naveed (2011) when studying educational trajectories in Pakistan. However, while I conducted fairly formal interviews with teachers and civil servants, several other informants complained how ‘white’ researchers just come and ask questions without sharing anything about themselves. Therefore, building relationships required a relatively high investment in terms of time spent discussing or sharing meals. I enjoyed having conversations with people, and if they asked I gave my views and experiences on religion, education and development, as well as other topics, which deepened our friendship.

Rather than identifying families systematically, I used a snowball sampling technique (Noy 2008) which spread outwards from my host family to extended family and their friends. I also approached teachers and clerics individually, and got to know other young people when I visited the school, sometimes developing relationships with their families. While I spoke with families of all social categories in Medina Diallobé, most were *toorobe*. Further bias was towards young people, those more confident speaking French, and women as many young and middle-aged men were not living in the village. Nonetheless, of my 147 total informants, I did speak with several members of various families, of different genders and generations, as demonstrated in the summary tables below (Figure 1).

Table 3.1. Informants' characteristics by age, social category and gender.

Age	No.	%	Category	No.	%	Gender	No.	%
5-9	2	1	Baylo	12	8	Female	71	48
10-14	57	38	Ceddō	3	2	Male	76	52
15-19	23	15	Cuballo	1	0.7			
20-24	34	23	Gallunkoodō	8	6			
25-29	19	13	Pullo	3	2			
30-39	14	9	Toorodō	108	73			
40-49	20	13	Unknown, N/A	12	8			
50-59	8	5						
60-69	6	4						
70+	4	3						

I also developed particularly close friendships with several people who became 'key informants', including many members of my extended host family, teachers at the schools, and three individuals who became my interpreters, described below. One person helped me in particular, and I owe him a great debt. Samba Ka was *toorodō*, married, in his late thirties, originally from the Futa Tooro and raised in Dakar. I met him in January 2012 as he worked as an administrator at the commune. Having studied international development at university, he was one of the few people in Medina Diallobé with whom I could discuss my research in depth. He provided me invaluable support and information, including insider information about the functioning of the commune and extra-legal activities of its personnel. He was well-respected in the village for his correct behaviour, and was always polite and gallant towards me. Overall, he was someone I trusted and felt safe to be around. However, there is another side to every access coin, and in some ways my close relationship with Samba hindered my obtaining other information which would have been useful.

To clarify, I received marriage proposals throughout fieldwork, and my close friends jokingly told me that many men in Medina Diallobé thought they "might as well try" proposing to a white woman, given that you never know when you might strike lucky. In most cases I would politely decline, or make a joke by proposing an exorbitant bride price, and there would be no hard feelings. However, the mayor's representative at the

commune, Aliou Sow, was more persistent and his propositions more vulgar. Several informants later told me he was known in the village for being an aggressive womaniser, and as he was well-connected to the mayor and had salaried employment, was used to getting what he wanted. Feeling somewhat vulnerable as the town hall was the only place I could check my emails and found myself alone with him on more than one occasion, on his third advance I assertively declared that I found his behaviour inappropriate. The fact that I was close friends with Samba, who was Aliou's colleague, seemed to make my rejection an even bigger affront.

After this incident, Aliou blocked mine and Samba's access to data held at the commune which could be useful to me. In particular, the commune had recently conducted a survey of households in Medina Diallobé for tax purposes, asking heads of families what schools their children were attending. This would have been valuable quantitative data on family educational choices to corroborate my observations and interviews. I never did my own survey as Samba assured me this document would meet my needs, and he suspected that my conducting formal surveys might negatively alter inhabitants' views of me. However, despite his efforts over many months, Samba was never able to obtain this survey as Aliou deliberately withheld it, knowing its value.

My experience was similar to Willott's (2014) account of becoming 'factionalised' - namely affiliated to one of two similar but competing associations or factions - when studying academic promotion in a Nigerian university. Risks of such a process are that the researcher takes on the view of the clique to which they belong, and loses access to the other clique(s) (Olivier de Sardan 2003, p.49). I feel I overcame the first issue as I triangulated Samba Ka's views with perspectives and experiences of other inhabitants of Medina Diallobé. In terms of access to the other clique, I had had difficulties gaining information from Aliou Sow before the 'incident' described above. As he was involved in extra-legal activities at the commune, I suspect - as Willott did in his comparable context - that Aliou would not have shared much information with me whether I was friends with Samba or not. Furthermore, while the lack of quantitative data on the extent of Qur'anic and Islamic school attendance is a weakness of this thesis that I acknowledge, becoming inadvertently embroiled in commune politics proved insightful nonetheless. It greatly enhanced my understanding of the benefits of inclusion in - and

disadvantages of exclusion from – relationships of clientelism with locally influential political actors, whose impact on educational trajectories features in Chapter Six.

In addition, I was nonetheless able to obtain some relevant local quantitative data, namely documents containing historical and socioeconomic information compiled by a local government development agency in support of Medina Diallobé's transition to commune status in 2008. I also consulted statistics from the *Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie* (ANSD) in Dakar. Unfortunately, a map of the village was unavailable at the time of my fieldwork.

Finally, I also made several Senegalese friends of my own age in Dakar, who I met during my pilot study in 2010 in the neighbourhood where I was staying. They were affiliated to the Niassiyya Tijaniyya order, introduced me to their *shaykh*, and I began to attend regularly their Friday sessions of *zikr*, a Sufi practice involving chanting the names of God. My friends had very different educational experiences, and in some cases divergent interpretations of Islam, to young people in Medina Diallobé. However, perhaps because several had university degrees and experience engaging with people from other cultures, I found that I could discuss topics with them in more explicit ways than I often could in Medina Diallobé. Conversations with these friends therefore helped me to clarify and make sense of many of the observations I made in the village, particularly regarding the significance of *baraka* and logics underpinning the value people accorded to different types of religious education.

3.23 The politics of language and interpretation

Building relationships and having dialogues with people raised the issue of language barriers. In Dakar, I conducted interviews with academics or development practitioners in French, and occasionally English. In Medina Diallobé, while schooled individuals spoke French at varying levels of proficiency, Pulaar is the dominant language. While I had originally planned for Mamadou Sy to be my Pulaar teacher and interpreter, once I returned to Senegal in February 2011 to begin fieldwork, his personal circumstances had changed and he could no longer accompany me to Medina Diallobé. With an ESRC Difficult Language Training grant, I spent three months learning Pulaar at a language

school in Dakar, followed by two months' immersion in Medina Diallobé. Although over time I managed basic conversations and could follow a large amount of people's discussions, I never became fluent, and was reliant on an interpreter for complex interviews especially with groups. I spent the first two months of fieldwork trying to find a suitable interpreter. At various points, I worked with three different individuals: Hawa Thiam, a 40-year-old *baylo* woman working as a teacher in the *collège*; Chérif Konté, a 26-year-old *ceddo* man involved in the local youth association introduced to me by my host-brother; and Habib Ndaw, 40-year-old *toorodo* of the village chieftaincy lineage, who had coordinated an NGO project in the village some years ago, introduced to me by Chérif Konté.

I developed good relationships with all three, and had highly productive interviews with their families, members of their age-group, and/or social category networks. However, the common challenge emerged that my interpreters felt most confident working within these networks, and when I asked them to organise interviews outside they appeared uncomfortable, or made excuses to avoid it. At first I felt frustrated, perceiving my lack of a flexible interpreter to be a barrier to getting information. However, after reading Berreman's (1962) reflexive ethnography on using interpreters from different caste backgrounds in India, I saw that the experience of working with Hawa, Chérif and Habib had been useful for gaining insights into people's divergent subjective experiences of the multiple cross-cutting social hierarchies in Medina Diallobé.

I met Samba Ka after my experiments with interpreters, and was able to talk explicitly with him about the implications of social hierarchies on my data collection. Samba agreed that although individuals offered to organise interviews for me out of politeness, if they then felt uncomfortable doing so they might then save face by finding excuses, rather than tell me so directly. Samba also emphasised the importance of *soutoura*, a concept found across Senegal, as the maintenance of privacy, dignity and respect, whose most important aspect is preserving the family's name and reputation. Keeping sensitive information within 'safe' networks of trust, where they will be kept secret, is crucial to people's efforts to keep *soutoura* (Ndiaye 2008, pp.156–158). Given the potentially sensitive nature of my research on family dynamics and decision-making processes, I suspected that people might only divulge information if they perceived me and the interpreter as part of the 'safe' network. Samba and I discussed the possibility of

an interpreter from outside Medina Diallobé but, given that social hierarchies and networks in the Futa Tooro extend over hundreds of kilometres, introducing a third party into an interview could still make people uncomfortable, and disturb the close relationships which I had managed to build so far.

Finally, I decided to see the fact that my interpreters were able to help me within their own networks as an advantage rather than a problem. Wherever possible, I asked friends or host family members to interpret for those present in the conversation who spoke French less well. This often happened spontaneously without my requesting it. Rather than see this technique as problematic because of the biases it generated, I followed the premise that all interviews, whether with interpreters or without, constitute creative dialogues in which the interaction between researcher and informant shapes what people say (Elliott 2005). With the exception of formal interviews that I conducted with clerics interpreted by Habib Ndaw, this approach limited my data collection among people who did not speak French confidently to the networks of friends and family I had developed. While this restricted my access to non-French speakers, I am certain that because of the high levels of trust built within these relationships, the opinions expressed were more honest and hence of greater value in contributing to my understanding of dynamics in Medina Diallobé, than they would have been with a third party interpreter, even if this had meant greater access to people who only spoke Pulaar.

3.24 Methods

In order to overcome the flaws of classical economic analyses of behaviour, reinforced by positivist statistical analyses based on questionnaires using pre-defined categories, the methods used in this thesis are ethnographic. I spent time with people over a lengthy period – eight months each in Medina Diallobé and Dakar - across a range of social contexts, engaging in casual conversations, observing and participating in activities (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Lüders 2004). After getting to know people and building trust (Ellen 1984, p.257; Heissler 2011, p.732), I complemented participant observation with semi-structured interviews inspired by studies investigating the values that different family or community members attribute to knowledge and education (Bryman 2004; Bartlett 2008; Levinson 1996; Luttrell 1996), and life histories of

educational trajectories (Antikainen 1996; 1998; Perry 2004). This combination of methods helped me notice tacit knowledge or behaviour not explicitly expressed; illuminated the conflicts between competing discourses or forms of value that people subscribed to (Lawler 2002); and highlighted the discrepancy between their explanations of official social norms or ideal scenarios, and actual behaviour (Olivier de Sardan 2005). This enabled me to understand the complexity of intersecting values informing people's preferences, and the subtleties of decision-making processes including micro-practices of deliberation to reach desired educational goals (Varenne 2008a, p.31).

One telling example of behaviour which went against official accounts, but which ethnographic methods illuminated, was women's religious learning. Time and again I was told by both men and women that men study in *daaras* but "women do not learn the Qur'an" beyond the basic verses. I started to believe this official story. It was only during the final months of fieldwork, when the temperature soared and I was restricted to the house for most of the day, that I observed women in my host family learning the religion, examples which form a significant part of the discussion in Chapter Seven on informal learning.

Another topic which ethnographic methods helped me understand is social category, which can be difficult to talk about explicitly, with or without an interpreter. In general, category inequalities have been neglected, disregarded, or rendered invisible by colonial and post-colonial governments in Francophone West Africa (Pelckmans & Hahonou 2011). In Senegal, "since independence it has been against the law to make reference to an individual's caste origins or to discriminate against a person in employment on these grounds" (Dilley 2004b, p.202). Referring to someone as *maccudo* in particular is considered to be derogatory (Dilley 2000, p.152).²¹ Hence, despite my observations confirmed by one informant that "caste is central to everything", making reference to someone's social category remains taboo. This raised the obvious challenge that no official data is collected which could provide quantitative support for the observations I made, for instance, on the proportions of different social categories in the population of

²¹ See, however, the recent emancipation movement, *Endam Bilaali* (Thioub 2012), organised by *gallunkoobe* in the Futa Tooro, who seek to re-valorise their category's status and positively re-appropriate the term *maccudo*.

the commune, or of pupils enrolled in state schools. However, many people obliquely referred to social category, speaking in terms of ‘racism’ or ‘hierarchies’. Having experienced social category dynamics in my own relationships, I could identify these references, and found generally that if I probed people in private, they spoke more explicitly about social category, and found ways to bypass taboos against doing so.

For example, when trying to ascertain the influence of social category on dynamics within the state schools, I asked school directors - once I had already got to know them well over several months, and judged they would feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics - to prepare a list of teachers, the subjects they taught, and their qualifications. I later met with them to discuss the data, but at the end of the conversation broached the subject of teachers’ ‘origins’, whether ethnic group or social category, and whether this had an impact on classroom dynamics. With the first director, our initial discussion had been clear and open, but once questions of origins arose I noticed that his voice dropped so that, over the whirl of the electric fan, no one in the adjoining staffroom could overhear us. “I don’t ask about this sort of thing you know”, he assured me. “It doesn’t interest me. But you hear, you know, you overhear conversations...so-and-so lives in this neighbourhood, is related to so-and-so... and you find out that way.” Another director used a similarly covert tactic to answer my questions. He gave me a printed-out list of teachers’ names and in front of me wrote their social category next to their name. Upon arriving two-thirds down the page he gave a start, leaned across the desk and conspiratorially hissed, “He’s *maccudo*! But I daren’t write that here!” After a moment of chewing his pencil he found a solution; while the other teachers’ names were partnered with the labels ‘*baylo*’, ‘*toorodo*’, or ‘*pullo*’, beside the latter the director traced a discreet ‘M’.

I also used ethnographic methods to help inform my strategy for communicating with young people, whose viewpoints are an important aspect of my research. In common with Johannes Kaland (2014), I found that scholarship on methodology concerning young people is scarce, and tends to be conflated with that of children. The idea that children are similar to adults but possess different competencies (James et al. 1998) has inspired researchers to employ task-based or visual methods to provide a focus for discussion, engage children in enjoyable social activity, and facilitate expression among children who might not be comfortable articulating verbally (Gordon 1998; Kellett &

Ding 2004; Roberts-Holmes 2005; Van Blerk 2006). I originally considered conducting a collaborative photography project (Frith & Harcourt 2007; Gauntlett & Holzwarth 2006; Singhal et al. 2007) with young people in Medina Diallobé, providing participants with a camera, and inviting them to take pictures of their everyday surroundings which we would then discuss together. I hoped this technique would enable young people a degree of control over the creation of representations of their own lives, and capture abstract phenomena such as what knowledge it is valuable to learn, or aspirations about the future.

However, several scholars have advised the use of ethnography to test the viability of such methods before implementing them (Hinton 1995; James 2001; Knupfer 2009). I soon realised that cameras or phones which take photos are rare enough in Medina Diallobé to attract attention, and introducing a prestige object into the networks I was part of would potentially be problematic. Researchers who had inspired me by using similar methods had studied fairly small and bounded groups of individuals, such as Qur'anic school students in one Nigerian Qur'anic school (Hoechner 2011), street children in Kampala (Young & Barrett 2001), or children of migrant parents in one Ghanaian school (Fassetta-Guariento 2010). In contrast, my sample was much broader. I did not feel prepared to offer the camera option to everyone, but based on experiences of giving gifts to members of my extended family I knew that unless everyone was included it would create jealousy. Finally, creating visual representations in general did not figure prevalently in people's everyday experience.

Yet, I was able to make use of photos in other ways to open up and facilitate dialogue. In Senegal, families who can afford it document weddings through a photo album (Buggenhagen 2014; Mustafa 2005). Among recently married girls I met in Medina Diallobé, the wedding album was a source of pride and one of the first things they showed me. Without my prompting, girls' explanations of their photos revealed how they got engaged, their expectations about marriage, and their relationship with their husband and in-laws. Many of these discussions form the basis of Chapter Six on how married girls negotiate the competing ideals of marriage and schooling. I brought my own camera on fieldwork and took photos of my host family especially on special occasions, albums of which I left behind as gifts. These were frequently consulted and enjoyed when I was there, and often used to test young children's knowledge (and

mine!) of people's names, and ties of relatedness between extended family members, reinforcing the importance of family networks in an individual's sense of self.

In the end, rather than employing 'special' youth-friendly methods, I used observation to identify spaces in which they felt more at ease to speak (Twum-Danso 2009, p.139). In a communal setting with little personal space, where those lower down in the social hierarchy are subject to greater surveillance, I learned to notice people's subtle negotiations of their surroundings to create opportunities to speak confidentially. One tactic several people used was to take advantage of the norm of '*duusde*', meaning to see one's guests out (Niang 1997, p.24). According to rules of Haalpulaar hospitality, it is polite to accompany a guest when they leave, either escorting them to the threshold of the compound, or even across the village to their home. On countless occasions I spent the whole day with friends in their homes, surrounded by their families, eating and chatting. It would only be when they accompanied me beyond the gate of the compound and out of earshot of their families that they would launch into more intimate topics. For young married women this phenomenon was especially apparent. Their ability to leave the compound is largely limited to functional trips of short duration, such as visiting the market, for which they needed their mother-in-law's or husband's approval. *Duusde*, on the other hand, is a culturally condoned practice for which permission is rarely refused, and enabled young women a small degree of freedom to socialise. Some of the most intimate conversations I had, especially where young people voiced perspectives contrary to their parents', husbands or in-laws' views, were upon being accompanied home. A 100m walk to my house would be conducted at snail's pace and made to last half an hour. Other similar tactics involved talking in a low voice so as not to be heard over the noise of the television, or in the kitchen where the hiss of the cooking pot masked our conversation.

3.25 Situating ethics

Finally, my relationships, data collection process, and presentation of material in this thesis reflect the decisions I have made while trying to uphold standards of ethical practice. Researchers must ensure that informants have sufficient information about the research, their role within in, what it hopes to accomplish, consequences of

participating, how their views will be documented and the outcome of the data, and that there is no coercion to participate. Guidelines of the ESRC and Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (ASA) state that ideally information should be in written forms which are signed by the research participants to indicate consent. However, if participants are illiterate or suspicious of formal bureaucratic procedures, verbal consent can be obtained which should preferably be witnessed and recorded (ASA 2011, p.1; ESRC 2012, p.29). However, in Medina Diallobé the logistics of informing people about my research and obtaining consent through a formalised one-off event proved inappropriate, and I opted for a ‘situated ethics’ approach, grounded in self-reflexive adaption to the particular context, rather than based on ethical absolutes (Simons & Usher 2000). This is supported by the ASA’s guidelines that “ethical decision-making has to be undertaken repeatedly throughout the research and in response to specific circumstances” (ibid, p1) and that “consent in ethnographic research is a process, not a one-off event, due to its long-term and open-ended qualities” (ibid, p5).

It took me time to learn how to explain the purpose and content of my research in ways that were clear and meaningful to people. I remember telling a 30-year-old woman that I was “doing research” and “writing a thesis”. She had a niece at university and I assumed she would be familiar with the idea of a thesis. A month later, I talked about “my work at the university”, whereupon she burst out laughing, saying: “University?! I didn’t think you had finished primary school – you can’t even *cook*!” From then on I told people that I was “learning about Haalpulaar culture”, and “writing a book about it” - ideas they were more familiar with. More specifically, I explained that I was interested “in how people choose between the French school and the *daara*”. With university graduates, teachers and administrators, I added that I was enrolled in an anthropology/sociology department. People occasionally asked if I would make lots of money from the book, and I told them it was unlikely, although it might help me get a decently paid job. I did tell them that while I doubted my book would have any direct impact on Medina Diallobé or its inhabitants, I hoped that I would eventually raise awareness about the importance of Islamic education among the students I taught at the university, and policy-makers (“people making the decisions”), because many Westerners currently see little value in it. People welcomed this endeavour, and I hope that over the course of my life I will meet their expectations.

While I judged that written consent forms would be inappropriate, I originally asked people if they would be comfortable “doing an interview”. I immediately discovered that challenges arose as, while teachers, administrators and clerics were comfortable with formal interviews, others felt awkward at the proposal. I remember the first time I met Malik Ba, a 22-year-old *sharia* student whom I became close friends with. After chatting for twenty minutes about his education, I asked if he would mind “doing an interview” because I was interested in his experiences for my research. I was shocked when he backed away saying he couldn’t possibly, as he was too busy. I was terrified that I had offended him, but to my relief he invited me to spend the afternoon with his family the following day. There we spent several hours discussing my research, his education, his worries for the future, and difficulties of finding work. A similar pattern, of informants being suspicious of formal interviews but nonetheless comfortable to share personal information in informal settings with full awareness of the researcher’s intentions, has been documented by other researchers (Gill & Temple 2014, pp.5–7).

For months I worried that my conversations with Malik and others were not ‘consensual’ as I had not framed them in formal terms as an ‘interview’, and there had not been a clear ‘event’ I could count as receipt of consent. At this point I spoke with several other Senegalese people to ask their opinion, including my Pulaar teacher, university graduate friends, academics in Dakar, and Samba Ka and Hawa Thiam in Medina Diallobé. They all agreed that many people were unfamiliar with formal interviews or one-off formalised giving of consent, so the idea did make them feel uncomfortable. However, they said people constantly gauge whether they trust someone enough to confide in them, and that I would be no exception. As Hawa Thiam concluded, “If they agree to talk to you at all, it’s because they trust you. That’s consent”. To reciprocate trust, I kept other’s secrets, a highly valued quality as one of my friends put it: “*Kongol ko ndiyam; so rufii, boftotaako*” meaning words are like water, once spilt, they cannot be picked up. I felt that their advice fitted with my observations, and that consent arose through my constant negotiations of relationships rather than happening in a one-off event.

I then concentrated my efforts on ensuring that no harm came to people as a result of their talking to me, including “risk to a subject’s personal social standing, privacy,

personal values and beliefs, their links to family and the wider community, and their position within occupational settings” (ESRC 2012, p.27), and protecting informants’ anonymity and the confidentiality of information they gave me. An obvious aspect of this involved not divulging sensitive information and maintaining *soutoura*. I have also anonymised the name of the village I worked in and provided pseudonyms for the names of my informants. Most studies on the Futa Tooro, including recent doctoral theses, clearly declare the precise name and location of the village(s) studied. There can be admirable reasons for doing so, for instance, “to provide a public account of recent history of development in the Futa Tooro” (Dia 2001). However, my data illuminates conflicts of interest and social injustice, and my informants would have wanted personal confessions, and tensions within and between families, to remain private. I feel that changing names of people but not of the village is inadequate for protecting anonymity, as even people in far-flung diaspora communities are connected by social networking sites, and are aware of the extended genealogies of families throughout the region. Villages in the Futa Tooro are structurally similar, with families inheriting the titles of cleric, imam and village chief. My research findings have broad applicability which is not undermined if I mask the identity of the individual village. However, if one knows the name of the village, even if I change the name of a leading cleric, or the mayor, it becomes easy to identify that person.

The name I have used for my field-site, Medina Diallobé, effectively meaning ‘village of the Diallo lineage’, is inspired by Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s seminal novel *An Ambiguous Adventure* (1972). Kane’s central character, Samba Diallo, is a Haalpulaar *toorodo* boy who attends Qur’anic and French school during the colonial period. Kane names the Futa Tooro where Samba lives “the country of the Diallobé”, or country of the Diallo lineage, the figure of Samba Diallo being a personified metaphor of the broader philosophical collision between African/Islamic and European worldviews. If the name I have chosen, Medina Diallobé, resembles the name of any real villages in the Futa Tooro this is purely coincidental.

The following section reveals the main characteristics of this particular village, relevant to understanding its inhabitants’ educational decisions. I have maintained essential descriptive information about places and people which are necessary to situate

informants' viewpoints. Otherwise I have been vague, or provided altered details about people to disguise their identity (ASA 2011, p.5).

3.3 The context for educational decision-making in Medina Diallobé

3.31 *Social, economic and political context*

The *Route Nationale 2* is an artery of asphalt snaking its way around northern Senegal. As it leaves the bustling city sprawl of Dakar, it heads north along the coast to the regional hub and old colonial capital of St Louis, before curling eastwards, entering the department of Podor, and the beginning of the Futa Tooro. Skirting the Senegal River and its tributaries, the road joins up with the dusty trading outpost of Ndioum, before dipping southeast into the department of Matam and the south-eastern edge of the Futa.

Along the *Route Nationale 2*, are large villages of 3000-6000 inhabitants which provide a focal administrative and economic point for smaller villages, dotted along dirt tracks, further into the *waalo* and *jeeri* countryside. Medina Diallobé is one such large village, located in the department of Podor, which on a good day with a functioning bus and competent driver, is a day's drive from Dakar. According to predictions (ASND n.d.) from national statistics collected in 2002 (ASND 2008), Medina Diallobé has just under five thousand residents, two-thirds of whom are women. It is therefore not as small as a rural village, but not as big as a provincial town, far enough from Dakar to exhibit cultural characteristics typical of the Futa Tooro, but well-connected enough that many inhabitants are familiar with Dakar and opportunities in the capital. As several informants observed, people in Medina Diallobé preserve their traditions but are also open to the modern world. As the following chapters demonstrate, this negotiated and contested balance is apparent in their attitudes towards education. The following description of Medina Diallobé is compiled through observations; interviews with school directors, teachers, clerics and village elders, Habib Ndaw and Samba Ka familiar with the political context of the village; documents compiled by the local government development agency; and statistics collected from the ANSD.

Contemporary social relationships, including between categories, reflect the early settlement of Medina Diallobé. The village was founded not far from the Senegal River

in the 16th century by a *pullo* leader who took the titles of village chief and chief of the land. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Haalpulaar social hierarchy counts twelve categories. In the Futa Tooro overall, the freeborn make up 70% of the population, the *gallunkoobe* 20%, and the artisans 10%. The *toorobe* are the most significant single category at 45% (Bouteiller et al. 1962 cited in Coulon 1975, p.34). However, it is rare that all categories are represented in a single village. Indeed, Medina Diallobé's *pullo* founder was joined by a *ceddo* warrior lineage, *toorodo* clerical lineages, jewellery blacksmiths or *waylube ndaneebe*, and each of these families' domestic slaves. After the creation of the Almamate in the 18th century, the original *fulbe* founders became *toorobe*, a transition then common among sedentarised pastoralists (Kyburz 1994, pp.153–159). Two additional *toorodo* lineages loyal to the Almamy were appointed as village chief and imam.

Educational decisions of inhabitants must be situated in the specific economic context of the village. In the early 20th century, a weekly market or *luumo* was established in Medina Diallobé. The subsistence economy of livestock, milk, crops, fish and artisanal crafts continued to thrive throughout the colonial period, although the administration's imposition of cash taxation pushed male inhabitants of Medina Diallobé to travel seasonally to work as hotel boys or traders in towns, returning annually to farm. After the first droughts in the 1950s, migration became more long-term with men staying the full year in these locations. In the late 1950s, a handful ventured further afield, to central Africa to work as *diamantaires*, and sometimes to France. One of the few surviving *diamantaires* told me it was so arduous that few in his generation travelled that far. Hence, until the 1980s, men - especially *toorobe* – migrated but rarely ventured further than Dakar or other parts of Senegal, working in hotels or setting up fabric *boutiques*. Others stayed in the village practicing agriculture, which now includes irrigated rice production and market gardens. *Waylube* continue to practice their customary profession of jewellery-making alongside agriculture.

Today, the weekly market in Medina Diallobé is still bustling, with stalls housed under permanent wooden structures in the centre of the village, with more traders selling wares on sheets of fabric on the ground, branching out through the side-streets and alleyways. The bus garage along the *Route Nationale 2* is busy throughout the week but multiplies in density on Fridays, crammed with minibuses of traders and clients;

competing for space with trucks laden with refrigerated fish, sacks of onions, trussed-up sheep and chickens; all dodging donkey-drawn carts shuttling people who have been ferried across the river by pirogue. Customary artisanal products like hand-made jewellery, woven cloth, incense, ceramic water pots, wooden mortar and pestles, calebasse bowls and spoons, and leather-bound Qur'anic amulets are still sold, but compete with cheaper polyester clothes, bolts of nylon fabric, mobile phones, plastic bowls, utensils and jewellery, mainly imported from China and India. The market is a significant generator of income and its presence has influenced, and still shapes, the identity of Medina Diallobé residents and their educational decisions.

Alongside the *luumo*, Medina Diallobé hosts several other small businesses. The post office with money-sending facilities was created in the 1980s; there is a health centre and dispensary; several wells; a water tower borehole since the 90s; and electricity installed in the 2000s. A survey conducted in 2007 by a local development agency lists over fifty shops, mainly general stores selling daily rations of rice, eggs, oil, sugar, salt, pepper, vinegar, powdered milk, soap, washing powder, coffee, juice, and mobile phone credit; a number of tailors, carpenters, builders, mechanics, welders and electricians; several bakeries and mills; fifteen restaurants or cafés; several butchers' stalls selling grilled meat; a private pharmacy; money-sending facilities; and a cyber café. These manual professions reflect a growing minority of single Wolof men who make up 2% of the village population. Being non-customary professions, they are open to individuals of any social category. By contrast, the craft of jewellery-making is still reserved for *waylube*, and the seven workshops are all located in their neighbourhood. All the jobs mentioned in the survey are performed by men with the exception of one tailor, women who run cafés with their husbands, and two shop owners. The survey does not include thirteen female school staff out of a total of fifty-odd; two women working in the health centre; several *toorodo* women who trade in fabric; many *gallunkoodo* women and *fulbe* from the *jeeri* work as maids or cooks for village households; and countless women of all categories engaged in cottage industries such as selling juices, fried doughballs, incense, and activities like hair braiding and embroidering sheets.

Despite locally-based trade, migration and remittances play a significant role in shaping the local economy, household budgets, and family relationships. More men migrated internationally from the mid-1990s, but the trend really took off in the early 2000s. The

2007 survey documents over a hundred migrants in Africa, predominantly Gabon, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Mauritania; another hundred in the USA; thirty in Europe, mainly Italy and France. In Dakar there are at least twenty affluent traders and fifteen civil servants. The numbers today are no doubt higher. A few dozen young people of different social categories, mainly male and aged 25-30, work throughout Senegal as *vacataire* school teachers, discussed further in Chapter Six. Over the past decade, the increase in migration has been accompanied by greater decline in agriculture. Now that many families have at least one member sending home 100,000CFA (£112) a month (which can just about cover a rural household's expenses) from Dakar or abroad, even if they own land they tend not to work it. There is little interest among the younger generation to engage in physical labour, and it is now mainly practiced by families with no choice to do otherwise, or to supplement other main sources of income.

Today, the spatial layout of houses and neighbourhoods, land ownership, socioeconomic status of families, and their degree of political influence all reflect the legacy of Medina Diallobé's early settlement according to social category hierarchies, combined with evolving economic and political dynamics. Eight neighbourhoods are recognised in total, each headed by a chief. Four are inhabited by the village's founding lineages of *toorobe*, and the *gallunkoodo* families who used to be their slaves. A fifth neighbourhood consists of *sebbe* warriors and the *gallunkoodo* families affiliated to them. These neighbourhoods are located in the centre of the village, and their *toorodo* and *ceddo* residents own the largest tracts of fertile *waalo* land nearest to the river. They are densely inhabited, with as many as ten households crammed into the one compound, facing into a central courtyard. Other compounds have grown up alongside, encircled with haphazard woven branch fences, usually adorned with colourful laundry, separated by narrow criss-crossing alleys. The sixth neighbourhood is Mbayla, further south towards the *jeeri*, and home to the *waylube* blacksmiths who originally settled there, and their affiliated *gallunkoodo* families. The *toorobe* therefore make up the highest proportion of the population in Medina Diallobé, followed by *gallunkoobe*, *waylube*, and *sebbe*.

On the northern outskirts of the village are two newer neighbourhoods called Sinthiane Hammadi and Sinthiane Sakho, from the verb *siñcude*, meaning to build a new village or compound. These neighbourhoods are more diverse, home to descendants of families

who have moved away from the overcrowded central neighbourhoods, or people who have recently settled in Medina Diallobé. They include minorities of *fulbe* and *subalbe* fishermen, and Wolof traders, in addition to the other dominant categories.

In the more recent neighbourhoods, the building plots are large and compounds lie dotted across the land, encircled by concrete outer walls, sealed by wrought-iron gates which open on to a large courtyard. In the middle of the yard sits a square concrete house, windows adorned with latticed ironwork grilles, which close with shutters against the wind. Even these houses are starting to look dilapidated as the youngest generation of migrants are building their houses even further out, with crenelated balconies, internal tiled bathrooms rather than privies, with even a dusty Mercedes or jeep parked in the yard. Other signs of status include being able to own a television, an electric fan, sofa cushions, furniture other than a marital bed, or employ a maid. Today, only some houses in Mbayla are still made from clay from the riverbank as concrete has taken over, and most have electricity. A handful of *gallunkoodo* families still live alongside their old masters, but most have moved away to other plots. One such family in particular has become rich through migration, but mostly they make up the poorer members of the population. Indeed, many still maintain relations with their former masters' families, helping to slaughter animals and cook during large celebrations, in return for material assistance.

In the 1980s, Medina Diallobé became the headquarters (*chef lieu*), of a rural community (*communauté rurale*) which grouped thirty surrounding villages under one administrative unit. From 2008, Medina Diallobé was granted independent commune status, the surrounding villages were transferred to another rural community, and a mayor and forty municipal councillors were locally elected. Officially speaking, with the creation of the commune, the customary political power held by the *toorodo* village chieftaincy lineage was replaced by a democratic system in which all social categories are equally represented. However, although the councillors proportionally reflect the social category make-up of the village, and six are women, the most important positions of mayor and his two appointed representatives are *toorobe* men from old aristocratic families. Indeed, the mayor, a *toorodo* civil servant working in Dakar called Ibrahima Sy, is related to the leading clerical family in the village. Similarly, while all

neighbourhoods have *gallunkoo* residents, no neighbourhood chiefs hail from this category, demonstrating how they are still marginalised from formal authority.

This local geography, especially the dwellings of migrants as a reference point for success, and differential access to wealth and political power - and ensuing clientelist relations - linked to social category relations, all inform people's evaluations of education in significant ways, as the following chapters document.

3.32 Educational infrastructure

The observation made above that villages of Medina Diallobé's size and location represent a combination of preserving old ways while being open to change is reflected in educational provision, the high density and mutual co-existence of both Qur'anic and state schools, and range of different educational evaluations among the population. The oldest schools are of course the Qur'anic schools. Medina Diallobé is a 'clerical village' where renowned religious leaders and clerics reside (O'Neill 2012, p.224)²², known in the area for its four *daaras* dedicated to memorisation of the Qur'an. The oldest of the four is at the house of the imam, Souleymane Ba, next to the village's largest and most central mosque. Souleymane explained how he was the 11th imam of the village, having inherited the position since his ancestor was appointed in the late 18th century following the *toorodo* revolution and establishment of the Almamate. In 2011, Souleymane was in his seventies and taught only twenty or so young children. While his *daara* had few students compared to the others, informants told me it was considered important because of the influential social role played by the imam, and prestige of his lineage.

The three other *daaras* are all run by members of the Sy family, whose ancestor settled in Medina Diallobé in the early 20th century. The founder, Djibril Sy, was appointed *khalifa* or representative of the Umariyya Tijaniyya Sufi order in the village, and passed his *daara* to his son, and then grandson Ceerno Ousmane. During my fieldwork, Ceerno Ousmane's *daara* was one of the biggest in Medina Diallobé with roughly a hundred students of all ages. A few compounds away was another equally large *daara* run by

²² O'Neill uses the term *marabout* throughout her thesis, and hence "maraboutic village" where I use "clerical village".

Ousmane's paternal cousin, Ceerno Alfa Sy. The final *daara* in the village was that of Ceerno Amadou Sy, the younger half-brother of Ceerno Ousmane. Ceerno Amadou's *daara* is smaller than Ceerno Ousmane's and Alfa's, with around ninety students.

There were four state schools in Medina Diallobé in 2012, but compared to the *daaras*, they have a recent history of only sixty years for primary, and a decade post-primary. Until the 1950s, the closest primary school to Medina Diallobé was located in the headquarters, or *chef lieu*, of the canton, and served forty to fifty surrounding villages. The first primary school in the village itself, Medina Diallobé I, was built in the 1950s. By 2012 it had twelve classes, two for each of the six grades in primary. For over forty years, Medina Diallobé I had remained the only state school in the village. Until the late 1980s there was only one *collège* at the department headquarters of Podor, several hundred kilometres from Medina Diallobé. In order to attend *lycée*, pupils had to travel over 500km to the regional headquarters of St Louis. In the 1990s, the state built more *collèges* throughout Senegal, but the next closest to Medina Diallobé was still 100km away. In 2001, the first *collège* was built in Medina Diallobé. A new grade was added each subsequent year, so by 2004/2005 the *collège* taught the complete cycle of four grades, and could award the *Brevet de Fin d'Etudes Moyennes* (BFEM). By 2012, the *collège* had a total of twelve classes: three each for grades 6ème, 5ème, 4ème and 3ème. In 2006, another primary school, Medina Diallobé II, was built to the south of Medina Diallobé to meet growing demand there, and in the surrounding villages.

In 2009, the *lycée* or high school opened its doors, and like the *collège* added one grade each year that followed. Hence, academic year 2011/2012 was the first time a pupil could attend state school in Medina Diallobé from elementary until completion of high school, culminating in the award of the baccalaureate. When I conducted fieldwork, there were three classes for grade 2ème, and two classes in both 1er and Terminal (in order to differentiate between different scientific and humanities streams). However, although the *lycée* was recognised by the state and teachers allocated, there was no physical *lycée* building and pupils learned in the *collège* infrastructure. Below are tables summarising the state schools in the village, the grades they teach, and qualifications they award (Figures 2-4). However, 'age groups' reflect official categories more than local realities, as many pupils are enrolled in grades aged five or six years older than these figures.

Table 3.2 Primary school grades, official ages and history in Medina Diallobé.

Year	Grade title	Official Approximate Age Group (years)	Academic year since this grade became available in Medina Diallobé
1	CI	7 – 8	1957/1958
2	CP	8 – 9	1958/1959
3	C1	9 – 10	1959/1960
4	C2	10 – 11	1960/1961
5	CM1	11 – 12	1961/1962
6	CM2	12 – 13	1962/1963
Qualification: <i>Certificat de Fin d'Etudes Elémentaires</i> (CFEE)			

Table 3.3 Lower secondary school (collège) grades, official ages and history in Medina Diallobé.

Year	Grade title	Official Approximate Age Group (years)	Academic year since this grade became available in Medina Diallobé
1	6ème	13 – 14	2001/2002
2	5ème	14 – 15	2002/2003
3	4ème	15 – 16	2003/2004
4	3ème	16 – 17	2004/2005
Qualification: <i>Brevet de Fin d'Etudes Moyen</i> (BFEM)			

Table 3.4 Upper secondary school (lycée) grades, official ages and history in Medina Diallobé.

Year	Grade title	Official Approximate Age Group (years)	Academic year since this grade became available in Medina Diallobé
1	2ème	17 – 18	2009/2010
2	1er	18 – 19	2010/2011
3	Terminal	19 – 20	2011/2012
Qualification: <i>Baccalauréat</i>			

All schools are concrete buildings with tin roofs, arranged around a central yard, with the director's office (and for the *collège*, a staffroom) at the centre. Dwellings purposefully built for the director and teachers exist on the school site or in the village. Toilets and water taps are present on all sites. All schools with the exception of Medina Diallobé II have a computer in the director's office. Inside the classroom, a teacher instructs from the front, while pupils sit at wooden desks attached to tables (*table-bancs*). There are few textbooks available, so teachers write the lesson on the blackboard with chalk, which pupils copy into their exercise books with ballpoint pens. Rote learning is a common method of instruction in primary school, and at secondary level I observed pupils continue to memorise their lessons by heart. Lessons run from 8am until 2pm, and resume from 4pm until 6pm, although *collège* and *lycée* pupils can have several free periods. Saturday and Sunday are days off, while holidays fall over the Christian celebrations of Christmas, Easter, and three months from July to September. Officially, primary school subjects are reading, writing and oral expression; history and geography; numeracy and science; art and music; civic education and hygiene; Arabic; and optional religious education introduced in the last decade under President Wade's reforms. The secondary school curriculum drops art and music, civic education and hygiene. It expands on science by differentiating between life sciences, chemistry and physics; and introduces French literature, English and Spanish as foreign languages, and philosophy. Religion is not taught, although Arabic language is an optional subject.

Despite the widespread view that the Qur'anic schools are independent of the state while the state school is run by the government, in reality both are embedded in the same local political economy in Medina Diallobé, and receive financial support from common sources. The clerics are not officially represented in the commune and receive no state funding. However, as they exert important social influence, local politicians give them significant gifts especially on the occasion of annual religious celebrations called *ziara*. Ceerno Ousmane is particularly privileged in this regard, as he is related directly to the mayor Ibrahima Sy, and hence has the support of the mayor's political allies. The *daaras* are also funded by the students' agricultural labour in the clerics' fields, and gifts from parents. In addition, graduates who have found work, especially through migrating, regularly send money back. I was told that Ceerno Ousmane and Ceerno Alfa's *daaras* are the most popular, and they have had the most students who

have gone on to become successful. There is a rivalry between them which encourages students to compete to provide lavish gifts, and both the houses and cars of Ceerno Ousmane and Alfa were built by former students. Hence, the clerics in Medina Diallobé are affluent enough that they do not need to travel to towns with their students to beg, as in other parts of Senegal documented in Chapters One and Two.

As for the state schools, a plethora of actors are involved in their functioning. Several government bodies influence provision starting with the Ministry of National Education, or *Ministre de l'Education Nationale* (MEN), supported by additional ministries. At regional level is the Academic Inspectorate, or *Inspection Académique* (IA), based in St Louis. The next level of decentralisation is the Departmental Inspectorate for Education, or *Inspection Departementale de l'Education* (IDE), based in Podor. At municipal level the commune is responsible for the primary school. The directors of each school plan timetables, check teacher practice, and liaise with parents (UNESCO & BIE 2011).

In addition, as with *daaras*, non-state actors, especially migrants, also influence state school provision. Typical of many villages in the Futa Tooro, Medina Diallobé has a Village Development Association (VDA), called the General Union of Natives of Medina Diallobé, *l'Union Générale des Originaires de Medina Diallobé*, (UGOMD), founded in the 1970s. The UGOMD has branches based in Medina Diallobé, Dakar, and large diaspora communities, and members regularly raise money, through donations or seeking donor partnerships, to undertake local infrastructural projects. During the 1970s and '80s, the UGOMD's projects were small-scale, such as buying mats for the mosque or repairing its walls. However, in the 1990s, Ibrahima Sy – the current mayor - was elected president. Under his leadership, the priorities of the association shifted and UGOMD members pushed for the creation of the *collège*, and financed its construction in partnership with the state in 2001. They also raised money for the building of Medina Diallobé II primary school in 2010, which previously taught under a temporary shelter. The distinct roles of the different state bodies were not always entirely clear to me or informants in Medina Diallobé, who often disagreed over who was responsible for resolving problems. This was compounded by the additional involvement of the UGOMD. The implications of this confusion over school functioning and pupils' experiences are analysed in Chapter Five.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter frames the data on education preferences detailed in later chapters by presenting contextual information about Medina Diallobé, but also insights into the reflection and data collection processes which have shaped the form and nature of my findings. Section 3.2 addressed the complex methodological issues raised when researching the perspectives of people from different worldviews and epistemologies, and the techniques I employed to try and understand people's perspectives. I started from the notion that understanding is achieved through self-reflective practice, dialogue and active listening. The quality of our interactions shapes the nature of dialogue, so my starting point was developing relationships with my host family as my main point of contact with inhabitants in Medina Diallobé. Behaving in ways which they found respectable was sometimes limiting as it affected my ability to develop greater relationships with non-*toorobe*, but was also enlightening for learning about social category and gender-based socialisation processes. My difficulties in finding interpreters also reflected the influence of strict social category hierarchies on interactions. Ethnographic methods enabled me to identify spaces and processes which facilitated the building of relationships with people and strengthened our dialogues. Observation and experience also helped me situate the views people shared explicitly with me through interviews and life histories in the broader context of everyday realities like political dynamics, characteristics of which were often not explicitly mentioned.

Section 3.3 presented an introductory description of Medina Diallobé village, anonymised in name and devoid of non-essential incriminating details to protect people from harm by safeguarding their confidentiality and anonymity. Importantly, Medina Diallobé is a fairly large and well-connected village in the Futa Tooro. It is characterised by a local economy focussed on trade in a weekly market; small businesses including some run by women; agriculture; and customary professions, like clerics and traders among the *toorobe* and jewellery-makers among the *waylube* blacksmiths. However, the highest-status means of earning income are civil service employment in Dakar, and internal and international migration, dominated by *toorobe*. Indeed, *toorobe* dominate numerically, socially and politically in the village despite the creation of a commune, as the main elected positions are dominated by aristocratic *toorodo* families.

Medina Diallobé has a high density of both Qur'anic and state schools. However, the latter date from the creation of the Almamate in the 18th century, while the primary state school was opened in the 1950s and the secondary schools are less than a decade old. Both school systems are embedded within common political and economic dynamics, as both have received large amounts of funding from migrants. The state schools in particular are characterised by a multiplicity of actors claiming responsibility for their functioning, which can cause confusion in the case of problems. With these specific contextual characteristics providing the backdrop, the following four chapters move to consider how parents and young people negotiate the competing forms of intrinsic, material and economic value associated with the different schools and their associated bodies of knowledge.

Chapter 4. Long-term study in the Qur'anic school or *daara*

4.1 Introduction

Many development professionals I met in Dakar stated that long-term *daara* education has no utility because it does not teach the skills needed in the 'modern' economy. Affluent, urban Senegalese parents I encountered agreed with this assessment, perceiving that the *daara* imparts moral education while the state school confers economic benefits. To reconcile the two, they enrol their children when young in a *daara* as day students to learn how to pray, before sending them to primary school. Several were even of the opinion that the *daara* was dying out. However, the reality in Medina Diallobé tells a different story. Here, as in much of the Futa Tooro, many boys continue to spend not only their childhoods in customary *daaras* as live-in students, but much of their adolescence and even adulthood. This schooling is seen by many parents, including affluent ones, to have as much value as the public school, if not more. I spent my fieldwork trying to understand this pattern of attendance.

Contrary to dominant economic assumptions, local people's evaluations of educational opportunities are not tied solely to possibilities of income generation. And when they are, their perceptions of the relevance of education to local and global economic opportunities differ to those of state actors, development personnel, and affluent urban Senegalese parents. After presenting the experience of long-term study at a live-in village *daara* in section 4.2, and which families in Medina Diallobé send their children to such schools, section 4.3 reveals why this choice remains an attractive one for many. First, I explain the spiritual benefit, embodied blessing, and moral value of *daara* education in terms of the local Islamic idiom of *baraka*. Second, I unpack how gender and social category identity play into people's evaluations of the *daara*. Third, I consider the material utility of the *daara*. Section 4.4 brings these different factors together by illuminating the patterns of decision-making which lead people to invest in the *daara*. It shows that to say simply that the *daara* is dying out is simplistic. However what is definitely true is that evaluations of the *daara* are shifting as local people adjust to changing socioeconomic realities.

4.2 Life as a student in the village *daara*

Life for students, or *almudbe*, in the large *daaras* of Ceerno Ousmane, Alfa and Amadou still share many elements inherited from the classical model of Qur'anic instruction developed before colonisation. Day students are Medina Diallobé residents, mainly male, and usually attend state school alongside the *daara*. Children of all social categories in Medina Diallobé receive some Qur'anic instruction. However, live-in students are all male, mainly *toorobe*, and come from other villages. Likewise, children from Medina Diallobé who attend *daaras* full-time are often sent elsewhere to concentrate and learn better without the distractions of friends and family.

The younger live-in students or *baydas*²³ of the *daaras* in Medina Diallobé are colourful personalities in the village landscape. Their life is tough; they are grubby with a few ragged clothes and often no shoes. To earn their keep, live-in *baydas* beg at houses at breakfast and lunchtime with a metal tin or plastic pot. We would give them a few sugar cubes or a handful of rice or millet from the storeroom, or the leftovers of lunch. Sometimes we gave for nothing, other times in return for small errands like fetching groceries from the shop next door, or sweeping the yard. Once students finish their studies, they also send gifts back to the cleric. Between breakfast and lunch the *baydas* learn the Qur'an; in the afternoons they work the cleric's fields and do other jobs for him like fetching wood for the evening fire. After sundown they study again, from a wooden tablet or *alluwal* – from the Arabic *alwah* - inked with a particular Qur'anic verse. Walking through the village past the *daaras* at night (8-10pm) through gaps in fences I could catch glimpses of *almudbe* hunched around the fire, the smells of woodsmoke and murmur of young voices wafting out of the compound. Alternatively, they sit reciting beneath streetlamps or under shop awnings along the main streets of the village, where their chanting competed with the drone of the mosquitoes.

If students continue their studies until late adolescence they become *sandas*. Few non-*toorodo* boys reach this level. *Sandas* no longer live in the cleric's compound or beg in the village, but request lodging and meals from local households. If lucky they find somewhere to eat, if not they try to earn enough through doing odd jobs to buy bread, or

²³ See Einarisdóttir et al. (2010, p.IV) for the same distinction between *baydas* and *sandas* among the Fula in Guinea Bissau.

their parents provide them with pocket money. Like giving alms to *baydas*, hosting *sandas* is a way for local people to give alms (*sadaqa*) and receive *baraka*. Many *sandas* work in the clerics' fields, although less intensively if they teach instead, instructing *bayda* students from the bigger *daaras* or other village children the Qur'an and correct behaviour. Girls and very young children often learn with *sandas* rather than in the bigger *daaras*. Many households in Medina Diallobé have a resident *sanda*; two slept in a disused building in my host family's compound, while another two joined them to study during the day. The *sandas* had swept the shed clean, and decorated the room with mats woven from bright plastic threads, mattresses and sheets, and their essential belongings: *alluwals*, a copy of the Qur'an, pens and ink, a soggy football, and plastic sandals in place of trainers.

The sound of their reciting the Qur'an very much shaped our everyday soundscape. If I rose early enough in the morning, around 4am, in the clear darkness I could hear the low melodic hum of the *sandas* reciting on the far side of the compound. After daybreak the murmur continued, blending with the tweeting of birds around the water tap, the rhythmic *thunk thunk* of wooden mortar in pestle, squealing children, and the swish of a grass broom on concrete floor. Stillness fell during the shimmering heat of the afternoon, but the *sandas* resumed their chanting in the chill of nightfall, and as we dragged our mattresses out under the stars and tucked our mosquito nets around us, they bathed us in the Qur'an. Whether it was rainy season, when water hammered on the zinc roof and streamed in rivulets over the clogged sand, or dry season when the sun baked the cracked earth and we all veiled our faces from the biting desert wind, the *sandas'* recitation was constant, like breathing.

Only a few *sandas* complete memorisation of the Qur'an. Afterwards, they can learn other Islamic subjects, like *sharia* and Arabic language. Several middle-aged and older men in Medina Diallobé had studied these subjects and taught them informally, such as Ceerno Mukhtar Sall, the imam's nephew, known locally for his fluency in Arabic and knowledge of the *sharia*. However, such men lack the means to establish their own *daara*. Thus, to study full-time, under a teacher of prestige in the camaraderie of meeting other students, young men travel to specialised advanced *daaras* in the Futa Tooro, including in Thilogne, Bokidiawé, Kahédi, or Ourosougi.

There are clear patterns regarding which families in Medina Diallobé send their children to *daaras*, and for how long. From the age of four, boys and girls of all social categories learn the Arabic alphabet, essential Qur'anic verses, the ablutions and how to pray, usually with a *sanda*. Having mastered these essentials, children from six years of age may then give up Qur'anic study to attend state school. Alternatively, they might continue further in memorising additional verses throughout middle childhood and even early adolescence while at primary school, and will stop once domestic tasks or schoolwork mean they can no longer continue. In Medina Diallobé this is a common trajectory for girls and non-*toorodo* boys. However, this chapter focuses on full-time, long-term study to memorise most if not all of the Qur'an, and hence boys who either never attend state schools or who drop out of primary school to concentrate on Islamic study. The following section describes theirs and their parents' incentives for choosing a *daara* education. The students interviewed were all male and *toorobe*, aged fifteen and upwards, although most I met were between 20-25.²⁴

4.3 The multiple values of a *daara* education

4.31 Blessing and moral education

Me: Why do you learn the Qur'an?

Yagouba: Because it's a book written by God, brought by Mohamed. And it translates life, all the rules and the stories of the Prophets, what is and isn't forbidden, it talks about a lot of things. And it's through the Qur'an that we can pray, if you haven't learned the *surat al-fatiha* you can never pray, your prayer won't be valid. If you learn the Qur'an, angels will come. If you finish, lots of angels will come and pray for you. And, the Qur'an contains secrets, BIG secrets. Everything that is hard or difficult can be cured with the Qur'an. All illnesses, problems and catastrophes can be cured with the Qur'an.

²⁴ This description of *daaras* in Medina Diallobé is fairly typical of the Futa Tooro. A survey of 54 *daaras* in Podor and Matam departments showed an average number of 97-137 *talibés* per school, 6-18% of whom were girls; begging practised by between 57-74% of students; most *daaras* charging minimal monthly fees of up to 500CFA; and on average 10 years required for full Qur'anic memorisation although only 20% of students stay this long (MEN 2010).

This exchange with Yagouba Sy, a 22-year-old *toorodo* studying the Qur'an in his spare time while attending *lycée*, captures several of the reasons given by Medina Diallobé inhabitants for learning the Qur'an in the *daara*: practical instruction for leading a pious life, the receipt of blessing, and learning invocations which allow one to influence the material world to one's advantage. The common logic underlying these different elements is the pursuit of *baraka* or blessing. *Baraka* can be acquired directly from God through one's personal actions. Memorising and reciting the Qur'an is thus a significant source of *baraka*: "There are extraordinary benefits for those who memorise the Qur'an", explained Samba Ka, *toorodo* and administrator at the town hall, "They benefit from God's mercy. When you learn the Qur'an, each time you recite it you are in a state of grace, God glorifies you and you will bear the trace of His words." *Baraka* is also accumulated through performing pious acts; a self-enhancing cycle as *baraka* cleanses your heart making you more inclined to do good deeds. While memorisation of the Qur'an is the main 'curriculum' of the *daara* and is in itself a moral education as the recitation cleanses the soul, students also learn moral behaviour through emulating the cleric's disposition and receiving informal lessons about pious comportment. While students in advanced *daaras* learn *sharia* with reference to Imam Malik's books of jurisprudence translated into Pulaar, in the typical *daara* moral values are not necessarily taught in association with hadith or specific quotes from the Qur'an. Instead they reflect a body of oral lore which is passed through clerics.

Following the moral proscriptions of the Qur'an imparted in the *daara* is considered essential for one's own, and the community's, happiness and well-being. This moral education is often contrasted against secular state schooling. Stories which abound throughout Senegal were repeated by my informants, including how in colonial times parents feared sending their sons to the French school, seen as the school of the Bible and the fires of hell. Indeed, one of Medina Diallobé's primary school directors told me that the Pulaar word *lekkoñ*, or faggot burned for firewood, sounded so similar to the French word for school, *l'école*, that the association between the latter and hellfire was easily made, and he remembered a cleric preaching to this effect in the 1960s. Another *ceddo* man in his forties explained that even in his generation the school "was associated with the West and with Satan".

Although in previous decades, the discourse connecting the secular state school with immorality deterred people from sending their children, today in Medina Diallobé this type of schooling is the most popular in the village. Even clerics like Amadou and Ousmane Sy are sending their daughters, although not their sons. Nonetheless, even among those who send their children to the state schools, I witnessed statements associating it with immoral behaviour. Moussa Dem, a 40-year-old *toorodo* migrant living in Italy, expressed such ideas when referring to Baaba Ndaw, a member of the Ndaw family of village chiefs, and a local politico frequently associated with corruption allegations:

Here, they say people who have been to Qur'anic school are more moral, but people like me who have been to French school have learned trickery, we're not honest. Even now, if you say you're an *almudo*, they say 'Well, that's someone who knows God', they take him seriously. But those who have been to school, they say they are rascals. Like Baaba Ndaw, you've heard of him? The Ndaw, they went to French school, and they're cheating people. They eat public funds. The Qur'anic students are praying in the mosque, they don't get into these things. So school creates a bad image.

Aside from being embodied through recitation of the Qur'an and performing moral behaviour, *baraka* can also be received through transmission from a very pious person, such as a saint or cleric. In the context of the *daara*, this is achieved through work, as Samba Ka, secretary of town hall explains:

Working for the cleric, there is a big notion here that you need to understand, which is *baraka*, or blessing. This goes hand in hand with knowledge. The more you work for him, when you leave, you could have the same knowledge as another student [...] but more satisfaction of the cleric, and then when he blesses you he prays for you.

The third way in which *baraka* can be acquired is through inheritance, and so members of lineages of saints, clerics and *sharif* are seen to possess more *baraka* than other people. It is for this reason that *daara* students seek to study under a cleric from a *seerembe toorodo* lineage, as such men are recognised within the local community as

having more *baraka*. Students who study under them are therefore seen to be more likely to acquire *baraka* themselves throughout the duration of their studies.

Amassing *baraka* carries significant benefits in the afterlife. Tacko, a 35-year-old *toorodo* woman explained that if you know the 99 names of God you are sure to go to heaven. And Sidy, an 18-year-old *toorodo* man, also gave the following benefit of memorising the full Qur'an:

Sidy: There's a secret inside. If you learn it off by heart you're assured of going to paradise. You can also take 500 people with you, like friends and family.

Me: Do you need all the Qur'an in your head or a little just?

Sidy: Even with a little, but it's more assured if you have it all.

In addition to benefit in the afterlife, being imbued with *baraka* makes God more inclined to look favourably on you in the current material world. This can be combined with *du'a* or using invocations which express one's faith and desire for specific things. Learning which Qur'anic verses, invocations, or names of God can be recited for which purposes is therefore accorded high value, as Mohamed, a 15-year-old *toorodo*, inferred: "Even if you stay in your room and just pray and learn the Qur'an, you will have all you need, because all the *du'as* are in there, *du'as* are to have what you want, and to protect you." The value and power accorded to *baraka* cannot be underestimated, and as such its acquisition is closely controlled. For instance, the question of whether or not non-Muslims could learn Qur'anic verses sparked considerable debate within my host family. Sisters Fatou and Diara, aged 22 and 35, were both against non-Muslims memorising: "Being Muslim, praying, and learning the Qur'an all go together," Fatou protested, "Non-Muslims can't learn the Qur'an because it brings lots of benefits". Their brother agreed, saying "If they learn the Qur'an, they will learn the names of God and they don't have the right to, only a Muslim does, as it's very powerful."

A further attribute of possessing *baraka* is enhanced mystical power and the ability to perform miraculous feats. While amassing *baraka* generally through the pathways mentioned above increases one's mystic ability, it is strengthened by a body of specific knowledge termed *batin* (from Arabic *al-batin* meaning hidden) or *lasarar* (from Arabic *al-asrar* meaning secret) associated with the esoteric sciences, practitioners of which are

called *dabotoobe* (s. *dabotoodo*) in Pulaar.²⁵ These secrets can be used for positive ends like healing, but also negative ones, like curses. Given their potentially destructive power, *dabotoodo* Abou Dem told me that clerics do not teach this knowledge to students in the typical *daara*. Instead a prospective student has to approach a cleric and request that he teach him. The cleric might ask for money or invite the student to work for him over several years. If he sees that the student is hard-working and of good character, he may impart secrets slowly as he sees fit. Usually, however, this knowledge is guarded and given only to the clerics' sons. In Medina Diallobé, the well-known *dabotoobe* had been taught by kin, and Abou Dem was the only one I knew of who had learned from a cleric not of his family. However, his brother reckoned that "People don't talk about *mystique* much but everyone does it". Samba Ka also explained that if they do know, they keep it secret:

Cerno Ousmane, he would say 'No, I don't know those things,' if you ask, he would deny it. So not only is he modest because it's not his speciality, but also there is certain knowledge that it's not easy to get out of him. He would give it to his son, or people who are very, very close him who have done a lot for him. He will direct you to someone else, he'll say, 'I'm a teacher, not a *dabotoodo*.' But clearly he knows a lot, lots of *marabouts* who know the Qur'an know some mystic secrets, and his father knew all the *batin*, all the *lasarar*.

4.32 Status and identity

In addition to accumulating *baraka*, *daara* education also confers significant social status. "The value is so embedded, it's a prestige," explained Omar, a *toorodo* man of the clerical Sy family, in his forties. "My son could become a bricklayer if he wants, but for me as a father, that my son memorised the Qur'an is a prestige." Such status translates into material returns in the form of influence in village affairs, political leverage, and greater marriage prospects. The seal of status for the students who finish memorising the Qur'an is the *mbaaral* celebration. Their family hosts a party where the young man recites a significant part of the Qur'an in front of a large public audience,

²⁵ This term is derived from the word *dabare*, meaning sorcery or magic, and the verb *dabaade*, meaning to perform sorcery (Niang 1997, p.19). Dilley (2000, p.157) describes *dabare* as being "offensive" sorcery, but in Medina Diallobé the practice did not necessarily carry negative connotations.

before his family slaughters a large sheep or cow and prepares a meal for guests. I attended one *mbaaral* in Medina Diallobé, in honour of the imam's nephew in his early twenties. It was a prestigious event, with easily one hundred people in all their finery in attendance, including high-ranking members of the village.²⁶ The man also receives an embroidered cover for his *alluwal*, which I saw prominently displayed in people's homes. When I initially met my host family in Medina Diallobé in 2010, the first things my 24-year-old brother Abderahmane showed me with enormous pride were his *alluwal* and *mbaaral* photo album from earlier that year. 28-year old *toorodo*, Kasim Sy, also described the prestige of completing memorisation of the Qur'an, including increasing a man's marriage prospects:

Your family will say *mashallah*, you're a *hafiz*! It's noble, grandiose, extraordinary. In the past you would celebrate your *mbaaral* and wedding on the same day. If you completed the Qur'an the women would be queuing at your door to marry you!

The status of *daara* education is linked exclusively to male *toorodo* identity, especially those of clerical *seerembe* lineages. 40-year-old *toorodo* Moussa Dem said, for men of such families it was "a mark of weakness not to have learned the Qur'an". Indeed, those families in Medina Diallobé who place most emphasis on *daara* education for their sons are the Sy family of clerics and the Ba family of the imam. The flipside of the status accorded to *toorodo* men through Qur'anic memorisation is the monopoly maintained over it, and restrictions of *daara* access to other social categories. This was not immediately apparent through people's discourses, as many inhabitants of Medina Diallobé – especially *toorobe* - put low attendance of other categories down to lack of interest or 'auto-exclusion' linked to the customary divisions of labour. For instance, a *pullo* primary school director said:

The *pullo* doesn't have time to learn or teach the Qur'an, he has his cows to herd. The *baylo* has his occupation, so no time for the Qur'an. The fisherman fishes, he has no time for the Qur'an. The *toorodo* works his fields and teaches the Qur'an, that's his profession. [...] Everyone learns the Qur'an but to make a

²⁶ Similarly lavish graduation ceremonies have been recorded throughout Islamic Sub-Saharan Africa, the oldest reference is perhaps a Tuareg account from the 15th century (Reichmuth 2000, p.424).

living out of it, a profession, is different. [...] Technically the Qur'an doesn't 'belong' to anyone, but it's having the time... others had their own professions.

Some inhabitants however framed this pattern of *daara* attendance in less neutral terms, stressing discrimination on the part of *toorobe*. These informants were either not *toorobe*, or were *toorobe* who had lived elsewhere and developed a more critical perspective on Haalpulaar customs. Omar Sy grew up in Nouakchott although his father was a cleric in Medina Diallobé. "The *daaras* are a system for *toorobe*," he stated, when I asked why other categories don't attend the *daara*. "If you know the cleric, and you send your children there, you will help him, he will help you. It's a bit like a mafia. The other categories won't be treated the same."

Anecdotes abound in the Futa Tooro about how non-*toorodo daara* students are usually not treated as well as *toorobe* (Penda Mbow, personal communication). In addition, a young *baylo* university student in Dakar informed me that it is clerics in Medina Diallobé in particular who reinforce the "indigenous discourse of difference" (Dilley 2000, p.154) between social categories, stressing the importance of endogamy. Adama Seck, a Wolof administrator, also confirmed that clerics construct the authority to teach the Qur'an as dependent on the inherited *baraka* of *seerembe toorodo* lineage in addition to knowledge. Hence, non-*toorodo* men do not invest in Islamic education not only because they prefer their own profession, but due to the dominance of this exclusionary ideology:

It's since the time when Islam first came to Senegal. In the Haalpulaar context, the first to learn the Quran were *toorobe*. [...] So that's how it spread and has continued to this day. And then their situation of...well, dominance in the society has meant that it has become their 'property' in a sense. A non-*toorodo* can learn and have knowledge, but he will never be of the same rank as a *toorodo*.

A *ceddo collège* teacher combined these two strands of discourse, revealing the link between discrimination and a self-perpetuating situation of auto-exclusion:

In 90% of cases, those who learn the Qur'an to the end are *toorobe*. Because in Haalpulaar society the *toorobe* are much more assimilated into learning the Qur'an. They were the first teachers. If you see a big cleric, you automatically assume he's a *toorodo*. Because they think of nothing else but learning the Qur'an. [...] Politically as well, it's a form of domination. While transmitting knowledge, they dominate the people under their mantle, who become subjugated to their needs. [...] The religion isn't just for the *toorobe*, it's for everyone. It's not reserved for the *toorobe*, you're a Muslim, you have the right to learn... [...] But it depends on the motivation of the parents. There are people who are auto-excluded, that's the problem. If you don't take your rights, people will squash you.

This philosophy that although everyone is Muslim, the *toorodo* is in charge of religious affairs, is captured in the pulaar proverb, “*Yimbe fof ngara mosquée, kono toorodo woni yeeso*” meaning “everyone goes to the mosque, but the *toorodo* is in front” (Abderrahmane N'Gaïde, personal communication).

To counter this exclusion, there exist cases of young non-*toorodo* men choosing to go *daaras* in Medina Gounass in southern Senegal, which teaches all men regardless of social category. Even in the 1970s, men from the Futa Tooro, including non-*toorobe*, migrated there to obtain Islamic education free from social hierarchy barriers (Coulon 1975, pp.76–77). I knew of two *waylube* men in Medina Diallobé who had gone there to memorise the Qur'an. Hamidou Thiam, a 40-year-old *baylo* living in France, described a *baylo* man in his thirties, Ahmed Guissé, who had completed memorisation there and returned to the village. I also met another young *baylo sanda* from Mbayla while he was on holiday with his family, studying at Medina Gounass. Hamidou told me that although it is still rare for *waylube* boys from Medina Diallobé to study the Qur'an in *daaras*, “more and more” are going to Medina Gounass as an alternative.

While these men are few, their studying in Medina Gounass could have implications for the religious landscape in Medina Diallobé. Hamidou Thiam explained how his friend Ahmed Guissé had tried to use his education to challenge the local *status quo* which bars non-*toorobe* from Islamic knowledge and office:

He led prayer here, next door at the little mosque. But the old man Modou Ly, [a *toorodo* who lives nearby, and one of Ceerno Ousmane's strongest supporters], came and started asking questions like 'Where are you from?' Guissé said 'Medina Gounass'. But Modou asked about his family, and he found out that he was a *baylo*, and he said 'No *baylo* leads prayer here [in Medina Diallobé]'. He asked his son 'How did you let this happen?' His son replied, 'He knows more Qur'an than you'. But Guissé stopped, he prays behind people now, because it's not good in the religion, it can cause all sorts of problems [Hamidou infers the threat of a curse from the *toorodo* clerics].

Despite Ahmed Guissé's attempts to challenge the *status quo*, his actions have not translated into greater openness among *toorobe* clerics in Medina Diallobé to allow non-*toorobe* to learn in the *daaras*. There have not been any changes in provision of education in the village, and non-*toorodo* boys must therefore continue to attend Islamic schools or *daaras* far away if they want an advanced religious education. Stories I heard from informants about other villages suggests that the trend of non-*toorobe* studying in *daaras* outside the Futa Tooro, and returning to establish themselves as teachers or clerics in their home villages, is a growing one. In contrast to Ahmed Guissé, some have managed to successfully challenge the *toorobe* clerics' monopoly on religious education and roles such as imam (Thiou et al. 2014).

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Like elsewhere in the Futa Tooro, the *daaras* in Medina Diallobé are an almost exclusively male environment. Young girls learn alongside boys with *sandas* or in their home, but the larger *daaras* typically only teach boys. The reasons given by inhabitants to justify women's lack of advanced Islamic study echo those explaining the absence of non-*toorodo* boys in the *daara*; their identity is discursively constructed as incompatible with learning the Qur'an. A frequent explanation was that women could not attend the *daara* after puberty for fear of distracting men, as Diallo, a primary school director explained:

Here, women at a certain age can't approach a man to learn the Qur'an, men and women can't sit together! In that setting how can a woman learn? Unless she

asks her brother or father or so on. [...] She can't learn with the cleric, so how will she do it? If there was a woman in the *daara* who was teaching it could be possible. But that doesn't happen, it's only men who teach!

Beyond the risk of their sexuality, another reason given is that women's bodies are polluting and that they therefore cannot touch the Qur'an. As one 35-year-old *toorodo* man said, women cannot learn the Qur'an in any intensive way, nor work within the religious sphere as an imam, because "God doesn't like their bodies" and when menstruating or following childbirth they are considered impure and unable to pray or touch the Qur'an.

Like the occupations based on social category, the most common justification from men and women alike for women not studying at the *daara* is the division of labour. Many explained that "women don't have time" with the burdens of domestic labour from middle-childhood onwards, and the fact that they marry early, from age fifteen. This discourse remained prevalent although I observed that it no longer coincided with empirical reality. In the last decade increasing numbers of girls have been attending state school until their late teens and even twenties, but this trend has not been matched by growing numbers of girls pursuing advanced religious study in the village. One 24-year-old *toorodo* woman, Khadidiatou Sy, studying at university in Dakar captured this inconsistency in her reply when I asked whether she had studied the Qur'an: "I have, but just the basics for praying. I'd like to learn more but... finding the time... You know, for girls it's harder, there's the work at home, and early marriage." The fact that she had been able to delay marriage to her mid-twenties to pursue a Masters' degree did not appear to her inconsistent with the idea that women categorically "don't have time" to study their religion.

As with men of non-*toorodo* categories, people would ask what sense there is in a woman pursuing advanced religious study when she cannot seek a livelihood with it, the professions of cleric, imam and *dabotoodo* being restricted to men. Others expressed how there is also a tendency not to teach women the esoteric sciences because its secrecy would be compromised. Again, 'natural' female characteristics are blamed, such as women's propensity to gossip, and that they will share secrets with their husband's family once they marry. 40-year-old *toorodo* Moussa Dem told me:

Women don't learn *mystique* because those secrets will go to her husband's family. It's also not advisable to tell women your secrets, here women don't keep secrets. They will tell the secrets, what with sitting around not doing anything all day, talking loudly. Men spend time together too but talk softly... My father gives me secrets that he knows from time to time, but never to my sisters. Secrets are only given to sons, because we say a woman will marry another and we don't want this knowledge to go to the husband. He will have the knowledge of his parents plus her knowledge, we want to avoid that, he will have more power than us.

Other explanations reveal that the naturalisation of women's absence from formal Islamic study disguises how men deliberately exclude them from the social authority and mystic power which Qur'anic memorisation accords. Ceerno Mukhtar Sall, a *sharia* and Arabic teacher, explained that women in the Futa Tooro do not learn the Qur'an because "Here women have a certain place in society – *debbo ko debbo tan*, a woman is just a woman, behind her husband." Samba Ka, who had studied some anthropology, gave his analysis. His was the only statement I heard where exclusion of women was linked to discrimination, rather than being 'natural' and hence inevitable:

This society is phallocratic, like many societies, so they always put men in front, the man decides, gives the orders, he is the head of the family. And women are considered as saints, but teaching of the religion is reserved for men. If there is a point that needs to be debated or clarified, we will ask men. [...] A man doesn't want his wife to know more than him in case she contradicts him in front of him, that is shameful. [...] Even if people wouldn't say it explicitly or even necessarily think it consciously, domination must be a part of it. Religious education in the Futa is more about reproducing the inequalities of society.

Sidy, a lively 18-year-old *toorodo* man who took pride in finding logical explanations for the way of things, expressed a common discourse – which Ware (2014, p.174) has recorded in Dakar in the 1930s - which captures how the routes through which men and women can best acquire *baraka* are constructed as being different, which in practice reinforces women's subordination to men:

Me: Why don't women learn the Qur'an, if it means you get to go to paradise?

Sidy: Well, women can be assured of going to heaven if they obey everything their husband says. In 99% of cases a woman will go to heaven if she follows what her husband says. Even if her parents object, she should follow her husband.

Hence, *toorodo* women's accumulation of *baraka* is linked to acquisition of religious norms and practice appropriate to their role as wives and mothers, emphasising their obedience and submission to men, rather than Qur'anic memorisation as it is for *toorodo* men. The content and context of their learning reflects this, as women both learn and teach within the domestic sphere. It is women who are primarily responsible for ensuring children's *needi*, translated as up-bringing or moral behaviour. Indeed, one *toorodo* man in his twenties, studying *sharia*, informed me that women do not need to learn in the *daara* because they can learn what is necessary for them by copying or imitating, in the home. He gave an example:

Women do learn the *sharia*, but it's cultural. You see *sharia* is rules and what you should or shouldn't do, so you can learn that at a *sharia* school, i.e. what the exact verse says etc., but you can also learn it at home. For instance, it's written in the Qur'an that you shouldn't eat with your left hand, but no one will teach you that in a school, but parents, especially mothers, will say to a child 'Don't eat with that hand!' Or how to be modest... or how to pray. A child of nine or ten knows how to pray because they've learned it at home, it's as if they don't have to be taught *per se*.

I was able to observe the women in my host family, an offshoot of the Sy clerical family, socialising junior household members including myself in moral behaviour – although these attempts were far from always passively accepted. The norms they instilled in children of both genders often revolved around monitoring whether they had prayed correctly and on time. We were woken with the refrain “*Ummu sa julat!*” meaning “Get up and pray!” in the morning, followed by “*A julii? A julaani tawa?*” meaning “Have you prayed? Why haven't you prayed yet?” throughout the day. *Toorodo* reinforcement of pious behaviour was often done with explicit reference to

other social categories framed as less pious, thus tying Muslim identity to *toorodo* identity. As Coumba, a 30-year-old woman told me:

The *ñeeñbe*, they do all kinds of jobs like blacksmith and weaver, they don't respect the religion much, they wear God knows what. Then there are nobles, we have no profession, just learning and teaching the Qur'an. The nobles took the *maccube* as servants. It's like in the past, there was *homo sapiens*, who didn't wear clothes and so on, those people are still like that, they know *nothing*, they don't even know how to pray.

As a further example of socialisation which combines Muslim and social category identity, young *toorobe* in my host family, especially girls, were subject to strict surveillance to ensure Islamic modesty in terms of dress. Before female members could leave the compound it was considered proper to wear a shawl which covered the hair, shoulders and forearms, as well as an ankle-length skirt. This was particularly marked among clerical and *sharif* families, women of which made sure of tightly tucking veils under chins and tugging sleeves over wrists whenever in public. Among the Ndaw *toorodo* family of village chiefs, I also observed an elderly woman retort to her grandson, when wearing low-slung jeans which showed his boxer shorts, to "Pull up your trousers, you look like a *maccudo*."

Similarly, family members monitored others' mobility outside the home – especially among young women - to maintain the intersecting Muslim and *toorodo* identity. One girl I knew, 16-year-old Houley, violated strict norms about appropriate movement outside the compound for a young woman, by staying out after dark at a school friend's house on the other side of the village. When Houley finally returned home at 11pm her grandmother Astou was livid and gave the girl a sound beating. Astou sobbed that her reputation at stake when Houley's behaviour sullied their honour as clerics, and begged me to take her back to Dakar with me. Islamic restrictions on mobility also intersect with ideals prohibiting contact with *ñeeñbe*. On one occasion, Houley and I crossed the village to visit a relation whose house lay in the *toorodo* neighbourhood next to the *waylube* neighbourhood of Mbayla. On the path we met Houley's cousin, who interrogated us as to where we had been, suspiciously asking whether we had been to Mbayla. Although she told me on several other occasions that she disagreed with her

family's attitudes towards *ñeeñbe*, Houley quickly justified our location, saying we had been to see the *toorodo* relation.

These findings therefore show that *daara* education for boys and informal socialisation practices by women in the home are both mutually constitutive of *toorodo* identity rooted in religious piety. These examples support arguments in favour of going beyond the “formal/informal” distinction pervasive in educational debates (Lave 2011; Rogers 2004), and indeed gendered notions of public/private divides in knowledge spheres (Froerer & Portisch 2012, p.340; Naji 2012), when making sense of the role of education in forming persons and their trajectories.

4.33 *Economic benefits*

When I asked what practical use there is in memorising the full Qur'an, many people replied that the value is not material or economic, but instead for 'after', meaning the afterlife. “It's not for earning money!” Khadidiatou Sy the university student exclaimed; “You'll use it when you're dead.” A 25-year-old *sanda* agreed, “It's useful for after; all this is impermanent!” This dichotomy between religious knowledge and the *daara* as being for spiritual development, and secular knowledge and the school for economic benefit, was neatly captured by one ten-year-old *toorodo* girl: “*Ecole ina nafi e aduna*, school is useful in the world”, she explained, while “the Qur'an is useful for afterwards.” However, this strict dichotomy quickly broke down in practice, as people's discourses revealed several associations between *daara* education and economic rewards.

Baraka acquired through *daara* education confers not only rewards in the afterlife; it can be converted into material wealth through endeavours conducted in the present lifetime. Samba Ka summarised this logic thus: “We say, if you want to succeed, you should have less knowledge and lots of *baraka*! [...] If you go into commerce, or teaching, or whatever, you will succeed more.” Several middle-aged men also reported how the *daara* teaches young men skills associated with typical *toorodo* livelihoods. “You learn everything, you learn the Qur'an but you also beg, and through that you learn about the village and do odd jobs”, explained one 45-year-old cultivator who had

attended a *daara*. “So by the time you finish, you have a livelihood.” The *ustaas* of Medina Diallobé I primary school agreed: “In the *daara* you work the field for the cleric, you fix things around the house, building, fixing fences, you learn how to do lots of work, practical skills.”

In addition, it is possible for *daara* graduates to go into religious professions, namely as a cleric of a *daara*. However, this profession is only really viable for a minority of *toorodo* men. To be a cleric of a large and successful *daara*, you need assets and inherited *baraka* of lineage. “Clerics are only respected if their father was a big cleric. It’s his son who inherits the *daara*, whether he has the same knowledge or not. This is the same for the whole region of St Louis,” argued Habib Ndaw. “Here in Medina Diallobé, if you learn the Qur’an and your father isn’t a big cleric, then you can’t be a cleric.” Moussa Dem corroborated saying:

In Medina Diallobé, certain *toorobe* who learn the Qur’an, if they’re not from a big well-known family, like Ceerno Ousmane’s or Ceerno Amadou’s family, then people won’t accord them much importance on the mystic side of things. Even in the Qur’an they’re not accorded much importance.

The importance of inherited *baraka* in contributing to the prestige of a cleric and therefore the success of his *daara* is reflected in the popularity of the four *daaras* in Medina Diallobé, as all are run by the prestigious Sy and Ba *seerembe* families.

These accounts frame this situation in negative terms for those who might wish to be clerics but cannot as they are not of *seerembe* lineages. However, Samba Ka reveals how this reality might also be constraining for men obliged to become clerics because of their parentage:

Usually they teach because their father has said you must. [...] Some are kind of forced into it, like their father teaches and they feel obliged to take it on. But at the same time, the fact that their father did it makes them well positioned to do it, people know their father and their name. You are associated with his name.

Alternatively to being a cleric, *daara* graduates can work in the prayer economy using the esoteric sciences, as a *dabotoodo*. However, “a person cannot live from *dabaade* alone”, one 35-year-old *toorodo* told me, who uses it only to supplement his main income from cultivation. Indeed, the *toorobe* men in Medina Diallobé who are not clerics of *daaras* but work as *dabotoobe*, who sustain their households solely through this profession, were atypical for being from the sole family of *sharif* in the village. As such, they were perceived by other people as possessing exceptional quantities of *baraka*, and could request large sums of *addiya*, a form of *sadaqa*, in return for blessings. “My father Mamadou Sy lived off *dabaade* and *addiya*, when people give you loads of gifts for being a *sharif*,” explained Omar Sy, a 45-year-old working as a *dabotoodo* to supplement his income as a school director. “My father would go preaching in villages too. He would go to the *jeeri* and bring back trucks of goats and sheep. People were jealous of that.” Omar’s 35-year-old cousin Seydou Noor, who had memorised the Qur’an and learned esoteric sciences from his uncle, also made a successful living from combining *dabaade* with seeking *addiya*. His cousin Mohamed once told me that Seydou Noor returned with two million CFA (£2250) worth of goods from his last trip to the *jeeri* – a small fortune at ten times the monthly salary of a low-level civil servant. Whether this sum is exactly correct or not, Seydou Noor was clearly wealthy by village standards, with a car and two-storey house more typical of a migrant than a man who had never worked outside the Futa Tooro.

Although *dabaade* and seeking *addiya* can prove lucrative options for *toorobe* with *daara* education, these livelihoods are facing strain due to socioeconomic change. An example I observed was Abou Dem, a 35-year-old *toorodo* and close friend of Seydou Noor Sy mentioned above. While Abou had memorised the Qur’an and learned how to heal afflictions caused by *jinn* from a specialist in another village, his income as a *dabotoodo* remained modest. He argued that the prayer economy had become increasingly monetarised, and prices were rising which put clients off. Moussa Dem, Abou Dem’s older brother, told me “Before [those who had memorised the Qur’an] could recite the Qur’an for marriages and so on, and be given money, but now no one pays them for that so they are required to do *mystique* and charge more for it instead.” Many people who did not work in this profession framed this change in negative terms, accusing *dabotoobe* of being greedy tricksters - a discourse documented more widely in

Senegal (Gemmeke 2008) - exemplified in the account of Diallo the primary school director:

Marabouts have changed, before they did prayers and so on but they didn't ask for so much money, or maybe didn't ask for money at all, if it worked you would pay. You asked for a prayer, you gave 1kg of rice. Now he asks for a car, or 1 million CFA [£1100]! I.e. [to make a charm to ensure the success of your visa application] to go to France, they would say it costs 5 million CFA [£5500], but you can pay 1 million in advance. Then if it doesn't work they have the million anyway. Clerics have become greedier and they exploit. [...] Now there are many charlatans.

The *dabotoobe* themselves frame this shift in less negative terms. "If they ask for more money, it's because the cost of living has increased." explained Abou Dem. "You have to factor in time, to perform some kinds of prayers you need to be in your room praying for a month even, only coming out to eat." Despite Abou's knowledge, he found it hard to make ends meet through *dabaade*. Unlike Seydou Noor, he could not rely on inherited wealth from his father as his family had only moved to Medina Diallobé in the 1980s, abandoning their land on the Mauritanian side of the Futa Tooro during the civil war. In addition, Abou did not have the privilege of being from a *sharif* lineage and hence was unable to supplement his income seeking *addiya*. Furthermore, not even this practice can be relied on anymore given increased costs of living, as *sharif* Omar Sy argued: "Fetching *addiya*, that shouldn't be your profession. People are getting tired of it too, every week you get a *sharif* asking for *addiya*."

Given the low returns on agriculture and the restricted possibilities for working as clerics or *dabotoobe*, most *daara* graduates do not work in professions linked to the skills acquired in the *daara*. Rather, *daara*-educated *toorobe* men in their forties and fifties in Medina Diallobé predominantly work as traders in Dakar, or migrate internationally, which many of younger generation of current *daara* students also seek to do.

4.4 Choosing the *daara*: An increasingly contested decision

Baraka, moral education, status, identity, and economic incentives are all taken into account when people choose *daara* education for themselves or their children. That Qur'anic memorisation continues to be discursively tied to male *toorodo* identity explains why girls and non-*toorodo* boys do not study long-term as live-in students at the *daaras* in Medina Diallobé. During the 1970-80s, with the exception of people from the Ndaw family of village chiefs who attended state schools, the majority of *toorodo* boys in Medina Diallobé attended the *daara*. Now middle-aged men, they usually work in trade or have migrated outside Senegal. This emphasis on Qur'anic school followed by the 'professions' of trade and migration among the *toorobe* reflects the broader history of the Futa Tooro region described in Chapter Two, but more precisely the specific context of Medina Diallobé as both a 'clerical village' and host to a weekly market. Indeed, Oumou Wane, a *toorodo* woman who had married in Medina Diallobé, frequently told me how its case differed to her nearby natal village of Wuro Mawdo where the pro-school stance of the village chieftaincy lineage came to dominate instead: "There aren't many intellectuals here, although there are in Wuro Mawdo, old men even. At time of independence many of them studied, although here in Medina Diallobé they did Qur'anic schooling and then went into commerce."

The parents of young *toorodo* men currently studying in *daaras* therefore made decisions for their sons at a time when full-time *daara* education was perceived to have overwhelmingly positive returns. Non-material moral and spiritual incentives were supported by material returns of status, and a generally high chance of economic success through several possible avenues. Mamadou Sow, a 24-year-old *toorodo* studying *sharia* at Cerno Alfa's *daara*, told me that although his sisters attended French school, his father, a migrant in Italy, forbade him from doing so, obliging that he go to the *daara*. As Omar Sy the 45-year-old *dabotoodo* said "It's about honour a lot of the time. And although it's not useful *per se* for getting a job, the parents just plan to send [their sons] abroad after." Again, while this predominance of *toorodo* boys being sent to *daaras* is typical of Medina Diallobé it contrasts with other places like Wuro Mawdo, as explained by Oumou's 28-year-old brother Bachir Wane: "There, you don't see what you see in Medina Diallobé of a big difference between casted people going to school and nobles going to Qur'anic school. Rather, everyone goes to school."

However, my discussions with *daara* students, and *toorodo* parents currently making decisions for their young children, reflect how the relative merits of long-term live-in study at the *daara* are increasingly being debated. While all *toorobe* I spoke with agreed that it still confers *baraka*, moral education and material benefit of status, the likelihood of economic returns has become more uncertain. This is making the choice to attend the *daara* a more complex one.

Many people, especially middle-aged *toorodo* men, argue that one can make a living as a migrant with *daara* or school education. This observation continues to justify investment in the *daara* education for its other benefits. Samba Ka, who spent eight years in Cameroon, explained “I know people who have gone to Cameroon and manage to learn enough French to get by within a few months, even if they haven’t been to school”. The *ustaa*s at Medina Diallobé I primary school corroborated this:

Often your studies don’t link to a profession, whether it’s French school or Qur’anic school. People here go to university, but then they migrate and become taxi drivers. I have an uncle who was a physics and chemistry teacher, he had a Masters’. He went to the US and is a taxi driver.

Indeed, the majority of current *daara* students hope to migrate. “If he can’t get work here, he might go abroad”, explained a 20-year-old *lycée* student of her fiancé, who hoped to complete Qur’anic memorisation in a *daara* in the next few months. “Can you get me a visa to England? Or the USA?” asked the imam’s nephew after he celebrated his *mbaaral*. He explained, “I have a cousin who went to the US to see a relation, and came back saying it was a great there, and anyone who says the USA’s bad and there’s no work is wrong!” Many of these accounts revealed that these *daara* students have networks of family members who have already migrated, including those who have obtained European or US nationality, who they are confident will be able to help them. One 25-year-old *sanda* told me he wanted to go abroad, and when I asked how he hoped to do this he nonchalantly replied “My father works in Paris. He has papers, and comes back to Senegal each year, so hopefully I can go there.” The fact that the *toorobe*’s networks and wealth continue to enable them to migrate and thus simultaneously enjoy

the status benefits of Qur'anic school is supported by a statement by Ousseï Sogo, a 24-year-old *baylo* university student in Dakar:

The *toorobe* go in for the Qur'an a lot, because that's what they did traditionally, Qur'an and agriculture, or go abroad, and they do what their parents did. We learn the Qur'an, everyone does, but they go in for it more. And they tend to emigrate, few *waylube* people have emigrated, it tends to be *toorobe* more. And there they get money fast, in five years they can build a house. So they have a tendency to say 'What's the point of school? You work for years here and get nothing'. It's a question of means as well, it costs a lot to migrate. Plus [the *toorobe*] know the best *marabouts*, the ways of going. And they have contacts over there.

That many young *toorobe* men belong to families with the necessary networks and wealth to migrate, and the discourse is still prevalent that one can succeed as a migrant without having been to state school, explains why the *daara* remains an attractive option among many parents and students for the status and *baraka* it confers. Thus, in comparison to assumptions among development actors based on observations from other parts of Senegal, *daara* education in Medina Diallobé is not the choice of the poorest parents who *cannot* afford otherwise. Rather, it is – historically, and increasingly so nowadays - a privilege for those who *can* afford it.

Auriol and Demonsant (2012) propose that parents in the Futa Tooro choose the *daara* for their sons knowing that they will migrate, to teach them values which encourage them to send more remittances – as has been observed in other contexts such as Bangladesh (Rao & Hossain 2011, pp.628–629). I would argue that their methodology is flawed as they use current rates of migration among *toorobe* as 'evidence' of historical decision-making logic. In contrast, my data – and other qualitative research - shows that making such assumptions is risky, as evaluations of education options fluctuate from one generation, and individual, to the next in lieu of changing circumstances. In addition, Auriol and Demonsant never actually asked their informants why they sent their sons to *daaras*. The study, typical of economic research based on Rational Choice Theory, falls into the trap Bano (2012b, p.13) warns against, of being "inductive, driven by armchair theorizing, which is then tested through application to

large-scale survey data.” Parents never mentioned to me that they sent boys to the *daara* so that they would provide remittances. While it could be a reason, I doubt it is the overriding one when compared to moral education, *baraka* and status. Again, this is typical of another pitfall of standard quantitative Rational Choice Theory economic analyses, that “the intrinsic meaning that religion holds for people has been side-lined in favour of its instrumental functions” (ibid. 2012b, p.13).

However, other people increasingly acknowledged that the *daara* offers low economic returns but stated that they are still committed to its other rewards. One example is Abou Dem, mentioned above, experiencing financial difficulties but nonetheless continuing his work as a *dabotoodo* despite the tensions it created with his extended family. Abou Dem still lives in his father’s crowded compound with his unmarried younger siblings, three married brothers, their wives and children. When I first met them, his wife Rabia proudly showed me their bedroom, with an attractive wardrobe and double-bed, explaining that although they were not rich, Abou bought them with his income from *dabaade*. However, on subsequent occasions I witnessed clear tensions with Rabia complaining to her husband about money. Her sister-in-law Ramatoulaye told me privately she thought Abou should get ‘a proper job’. His brother Moussa Dem also expressed his concern that as the sole migrant he was under huge pressure to provide for everyone else. These tensions were manifest between Abou Dem and Rabia in the choice of education for their children. Abou explained to me how important it is to know God, and was going to send his eldest son Bilal, aged five, to the *daara*. When I asked Rabia about it separately she sighed and said: “Bilal doesn’t go to school. He just does the Qur’an. Because his father doesn’t accept that he goes to school. But my second son will do both, *inshallah*.”

Another example of reconciling the tensions between intrinsic and material benefits of *daara* education, and persisting with the *daara*, is captured in the reflections of 25-year-old *toorodo daara* student, Malik Ba. His father, Younouss Ba, had six wives and over twenty children. He is wealthy in the sense of owning several properties, but nonetheless has little disposable income to spend on his large family. Malik is the eldest son of his father’s second wife. He studied in boarding *daaras* in Dakar for eight years before moving home to the Futa Tooro when his father could no longer afford the fees. When I met Malik he was studying *sharia* in an advanced *daara* some hours’ travel

from Medina Diallobé. He is a sensitive young man, and was frequently preoccupied by the competing social demands of pressures to support his family economically given that he lacked the funds to migrate, and his somewhat domineering father's expectations that he complete his Islamic studies:

Me: You won't emigrate then?

Malik: Not any time soon.

Me: What will you do for work?

Malik: I don't know. Once your studies are finished, you're like a newborn. And they say 'find work', and that's your baptism.

Me: Why not study French?

Malik: It's too late, I'm too old, and have no time.

Me: How long do you still have to go?

Malik: Maybe two years or so before finishing... I could start French, but I think it's best to continue on the path I'm on, if I started French then it would mean abandoning what I've worked for so far. I love these studies in my heart and spirit, if it weren't for that I would leave it tomorrow. If I could, I would teach what I know, about the *sharia*, like my *marabout*. But I need to earn money. I learn the *sharia* for myself alone, and each day I want to quit and work, I want to give up my studies, but I haven't got very far in *sharia*. But it can on forever, there's no end. And it doesn't lead to anything specific. It's hard to find work here. You need to have a father with connections or whatever, it's hard. I want to earn money for my mother, she's old and has nothing. My father can't provide everything, it's been a long time since he retired. I'm her eldest son, I should be working. For men, working is an obligation in the religion. My mother's co-wife has older sons who are abroad who send her money, but they don't give money to my mother, or only occasionally, and it's not enough. And it makes me feel bad. But if I suggest quitting, my father will just yell and say '*ka kaangaado*', [you're crazy], I've educated you since you were a child, for you to just quit' etc.

Me: But doesn't he want you to work?

Malik: Mmmm... he values studying...

Malik also considers the viability of working in the prayer economy to be declining, because of increased costs of living: “These days everyone does *dabaade*, but it’s not feasible, not everyone can make a living off that, and you don’t get much.” These difficulties notwithstanding, Malik hoped that his infant half-brother would grow up to memorise the Qur’an as he had, as God might make his circumstances easier.

By contrast, I encountered several examples of intergenerational tensions leading to a shift away from *daara* education among younger people. One case was Kasim Sy, a 28-year-old *toorodo* who had chosen to abandon both state school and the *daara*. He emphasised that there is significant status associated with *daara* education and proudly introduced me to his cousin who had recently completed memorisation of the Qur’an, patting him on the back and treating him with affectionate deference. However, he explained why he himself quit Qur’anic education, and would prefer the state school for his sons:

You gain respect, but aside from that... Feeding your family is more important! You can’t work with the Qur’an. Absolutely nothing. You have to start again once you’ve finished. Before, your parents would take care of you, and you would work the fields. People were under their parents’ care for a long time, it was the collective life. The world has changed, things cost a lot more, and we are forced to change with it. But people cling to their traditions, it’s so embedded. It’s hard to suggest anything different.

In addition, difficulties that recent migrants to Europe and the US are facing are leading them to reevaluate the role of *daara* education. “The interest in religious education is declining a bit,” according to 30-year-old Ali Ka, one of the rare male *toorodo* university graduates from Medina Diallobé, who works in Senegal as an engineer. “Before, you could trade or be a migrant without having been to school”, he added, “Now because of the economic crisis in Europe, people see the need for schooling and administrative-type jobs more within Senegal”. The latest generation of men who migrated from Medina Diallobé in the early 2000s are also challenging the idea that *daara* education is enough for a migrant in Europe or the US to get by with. Moussa Dem explained how it had changed school attendance patterns in his family:

Lots of migrants are now demanding that their younger siblings and cousins go to school, as a condition for sending money. My cousin in the USA does this. They went to the *daara* and have gone to the USA in 2000-2001 with [Mauritanian] refugee visas or commerce visas. They weren't schooled, and realise they have to do manual labour while those with schooling who can read can be a team supervisor and sit at a desk all day.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the rationales among people in Medina Diallobé who invest in long-term *daara* education. By revealing the complexity of intersecting factors which shape individuals' decisions, these insights challenge several assumptions described in Chapter One. The value residents attribute to accumulation of *baraka* contrasts with understandings of educational value among international development professionals and the Western-educated Senegalese state elite. The importance people place on education for the afterlife, especially the role of *baraka* in this process, has been neglected in state education provision reflecting a lack of curricular justice. Rooted in an epistemology which recognises the intrinsic sacred value of the Qur'anic text and possible transmission of blessing between people, the idea of *baraka* is poorly understood – or dismissed as superstition - by people unfamiliar with this worldview. However, understanding the importance people accord to acquisition of *baraka* through the routes of Qur'anic memorisation, moral behaviour and transmission of blessing from the cleric, is essential to comprehending the continued popularity of *daara* education.

Among Medina Diallobé residents, intrinsic value of *daara* education is also bolstered by perceptions of its economic value. This challenges the assumption mentioned in Chapter One of a dichotomy between state schools which people choose for economic value, and religious schools which people choose for 'irrational' non-economic intrinsic value or material deprivation. Perceptions of the economic value of Qur'anic schools have to be situated in the social context of the Futa Tooro, where *toorobe* with this education have historically been able to make a living from agriculture, trade, internal and international migration, and religious professions among *seerembe* lineages, supplemented with *addiya* in the case of *sharif*. People's decisions are further linked to

immediate specificities of Medina Diallobé, namely the village's reputation for Islamic scholarship and a thriving market. The stereotype that only poor parents send their sons to *daaras* does not apply to Medina Diallobé as both affluent and less well-off *toorobe* still send their sons, although those from families privileged with inherited wealth, *baraka*, and membership in networks facilitating trade or migration, are more likely to make significant economic returns.

Qur'anic memorisation is also accompanied by material value in the form of status, mainly conferred on male *toorobe* given the exclusive twinning of religious authority with gender and social category. This ideology is deliberately perpetuated by *toorodo* clerics through exclusion of non-*toorodo* men from *daaras*, who despite studying elsewhere have failed to shake the *toorodo* monopoly over religious education and positions in Medina Diallobé. It is also maintained through celebration of feminine *toorodo* identity based on informal teaching and learning which, although valued, confers less social authority than formal Islamic education. These examples pose a challenge to formal/informal or public/private sphere distinctions commonplace in educational literature, as *toorodo* men and women's religious teaching and learning practices are co-dependent and mutually constitutive of their social category identity.

These observations also enable us to challenge several simplistic assumptions about decision-making described in Chapter One. The first is that Muslim parents are more likely to send their daughters than sons to Islamic schools as economic incentives drive school choice for sons, while social or religious values drive school choice for daughters. Findings from Medina Diallobé show that values drive parents' school choices for both sons and daughters. The second assumption is the notion that Islamic schools are disempowering to women for inculcating norms in contradiction to Western standards of gender equality. This is countered by the fact that in this context exclusion of women from Islamic education, rather than state school, can be considered a challenge to gender equality, as women are barred from the knowledge which confers the most status and influence.

The maintenance of an 'Islamic' identity among the *toorobe* is linked to the fact that religious authority, with political and economic power, underpins their privileged social status. Hence, the intrinsic value of Qur'anic school has been reinforced through its

conferring status and economic benefits. Commitment to the *daara* therefore produces certain social relationships, but it also contingent upon them. Nonetheless, this balance is being altered under shifting economic conditions, as Medina Diallobé inhabitants increasingly feel that a full-time live-in *daara* education no longer confers sufficient economic benefit. Some *toorobe* forfeit on economic returns and continue to invest in their own, or their sons', *daara* education for personal religious fulfilment and status. Alternatively, in other families, people are more likely to send the current generation of young boys to primary school rather than the *daara*. This shift provides the opening for the focus of the next two chapters: the experience of attending secondary state schools in the village. Other alternatives to full-time *daara* education are to attend private Islamic schools or to study other subjects alongside the *daara*, considered in Chapter Seven.

Chapter 5. Attending state school (I): Dropping out of secondary school

5.1 Introduction

Despite the popularity of live-in Qur'anic education for boys of *seerembe toorodo* parents, the majority of Medina Diallobé children, whether male or female, *toorodo*, or other social categories, attend state schools. The primary school has long been present in the village and its popularity among families other than the clerical *toorobe* is ubiquitous. However, the *collège* and *lycée* are more recent establishments and people's evaluations of, and engagement with them are more varied and contested. This chapter concerns the trajectories of pupils who never attend post-primary education or who drop-out during the lower secondary. Section 5.2 illuminates how post-primary schools are not only recent, but attending them is difficult and disrupted for several reasons. Section 5.3 analyses the cases of boys who drop out after primary or during *collège*. For *toorodo* boys with family links to trade and migration networks, the promises of long-term economic gains from the school compete unfavourably with masculine ideals of being a breadwinner through professions which can be pursued immediately and do not require diplomas. Boys without these networks, who would like to attend school, drop out due to constraints.

Section 5.4 moves to consider the experiences of female pupils who drop out because they get married. Contrary to many development policies which focus on parents as the key actors in defining girls' educational trajectories, teenage girls' stories show that not only is their own agency significant, but also the views of their parents and extended family. This section considers the wider social networks in which girls are embedded, including how girls' and their parents' views compete with those of husbands and in-laws. Shifting demand among men inside and outside the village for schooled wives also has important implications for girls' educational trajectories. Chapter Six complements these stories by addressing those pupils who do invest in achieving the BFEM or baccalaureate diplomas.

5.2 Secondary schools in Medina Diallobé: Recent and disrupted

In the 1950s, few boys from Medina Diallobé attended primary school as inhabitants feared that it was ‘the school of the devil’. Although the colonial authorities demanded that the sons of chiefs attend, people recounted stories common throughout the Futa Tooro that chiefs sent one of their slaves or bribed local officials to exempt their children. Today, however, most children attend primary school except boys from *seerembe toorodo* families who prefer the *daara*, reflected in enrolment disparities between the two village primary schools. In Medina Diallobé I, there are twice as many girls as boys. This the director attributed to the clerical *toorodo* families, the Sy clerics and the imam, living to the north of the village, who send their sons to *daaras*. In contrast, in Medina Diallobé II there are almost equal numbers of girls and boys. The director argued that his school is to the south of Medina Diallobé, catering to non-clerical *toorodo* families and other categories, so clerical families’ decisions do not affect the gender enrolment ratio. Hence, the status associated with ‘being schooled’ to primary level has become the norm – or “institutionalised” (Gérard 2001, p.64) - for a large proportion of Medina Diallobé’s population. Indeed, when I asked parents why they sent their children many shrugged to imply it was an obvious choice. Of her 16-year-old daughter Houley’s schooling, 35-year-old Diara replied vaguely, saying “*Le monde l’oblige*, the world requires it.” Pupils seemingly feel the same, as Ismaila Gueye, 28-year-old *lycée* teacher, stated “Primary school is in fashion, if you don’t go, you’re marginalised a bit. That’s why people like to go to school now.”

Despite the primary school being present in the village for sixty years, and attendance the norm for most children, post-primary state school provision is much more recent. As *collèges* and *lycées* were several hundred kilometres from the village until the 2000s, only three men from Medina Diallobé born in the 1960s, now in their fifties, had completed high school and university. Their cases are particular: they are all *toorobe*, of political lineages like village chief, whose fathers held colonial administrative posts including canton chief. Two grew up in towns where post-primary state school was more accessible and valued. More commonly, *toorodo* men from Medina Diallobé born in the 1960s studied at *daaras*, while other categories did not attend formal schooling whether state or Qur’anic. Hence, most parents of children and even adolescents in Medina Diallobé today did not attend state school.

From the late 1980s, demand among parents in Medina Diallobé for post-primary schooling grew. This was due, informants told me, to the influence of migrants arguing in its favour. *Toorobe* of the political families including of the village chieftaincy, *sebbe*, and some *waylube* families, sent their children, including girls. It was still rare for *gallunkoobe* to attend school. Even in the 1990s, attending *collège* required that a pupil travel to another town for the duration of their studies. This entailed either having relations there or finding a host family. Many people born in the 1980s, in their late twenties, described the difficulties of living with host families, and how they therefore abandoned secondary school. Girls in particular found it hard.²⁷ It is rare that the older siblings of the current generation of children and adolescents in Medina Diallobé have completed *collège* or *lycée*. The opening of the *collège* in Medina Diallobé in 2001 and the *lycée* in 2011 therefore served to meet growing demand for post-primary schools among parents and young people.

In general, demand for secondary education among Medina Diallobé inhabitants is linked to three forms of value. The discussion below, captured during a class debate between *collège* pupils in response to the question “What is the value of school?” reflects these different elements:

Moussa: We need to be educated to prepare our future, it’s very important for everyone. Every human needs to go to school to improve himself, to speak another language fluently.

Bineta: Education is the most important thing in the world. If you’re a person, you need to do things for your society. Everywhere you go, you will need your education.

Kasim: Education is the key for good development in the country. If you aren’t educated, you won’t know anything about what’s happening in the world.

Fatou: You won’t understand what’s on TV, on the news, if you don’t go to school.

²⁷ Schmitz (2009, p.103) notes a similar situation in the village of Mboumba. Until the construction of a school covering the full course of primary in the 1950s, pupils had to find a host family in order to attend school elsewhere. *Gallunkoobe* and other poorer inhabitants of the village could not afford this expense.

Souleye: If you're educated you will live peacefully. If you're not educated, people will think you're impolite, they will call you an imbecile. If you're educated you can do what you want.

Moussa: You can't talk of development without education. Developing countries have more illiterate people. In Senegal and other African countries, there are lots of children begging in the streets, they have problems with their parents, forced marriages before 18 years old. I advise all parents and children to go to school.

Abdou: The hospital and the school, you can't get a job in those places without education.

This discussion shows three forms of value attributed to the state secondary school – which mirror those considered for the *daara*. The first is intrinsic value of knowledge including general awareness of the world and foreign languages. The second form of value is material benefit in terms of individual self-improvement or status in contrast to 'uneducated' people framed as 'impolite' or 'imbeciles'. The third form of value is economic utility. Knowledge of French is considered the most important skill for finding work, although, officially, obtaining a job in the formal sector is contingent on obtaining the baccalaureate diploma. As Boubacar, an 18-year-old *toorodo* in 4^{ème} *collège* said: "In Senegal you need a diploma to do anything, i.e. you need the bac or no firm will employ you."

However, despite increased access to post-primary schooling and multiple forms of value attributed to it, the experience of attendance is difficult. In Medina Diallobé, people frequently complained about the effects of policies implemented under pressure from development donors to increase enrolment. Pupils stated that the Zero Repetition policy in primary (*Politique de Zéro Redoublement (PZR)*) (Diouf 2010; Dieye 2012) and abolition of the *collège* entry exam (Coulibaly 2010) enabled pupils with low academic levels to move on a grade, which lowered the learning standard for all. Pupils and directors complained that the state's recruitment of *vacataire* teachers lowered quality of teaching, and led to uncommitted teachers. Teachers complained of low and unpaid salaries.

In addition, although the *lycée* was opened in Medina Diallobé in 2011 and teachers deployed, a physical *lycée* building did not yet exist and its pupils were taught in the

collège infrastructure. Classrooms were therefore overcrowded with a shortage of *table-bancs*, with pupils improvising seating with plastic water containers. Neither *collège* nor *lycée* pupils were taught the full official syllabi, as the director reduced teaching in both schools under his management to accommodate *lycée* teaching into the *collège* building. He acknowledged that this was not an ideal situation but could see no alternative. All actors involved with the school therefore felt that the national push to open *collèges* and *lycées* had not been accompanied by adequate infrastructure or support of teachers. There was also confusion over who was accountable, as everyone accused everyone else. Fingers were pointed at pupils, directors, teachers, the commune, the mayor, the IDE in Podor, the IA in St Louis, the Minister for Education, the UGOMD village development association, and the parents' association, for the various problems.

Due to these grievances, strikes erupted at local and national levels, and throughout Senegal the academic year 2011/2012 was severely interrupted. In December 2011, a group of Medina Diallobé's *lycée* pupils struck in response to the lack of *table-bancs* and school building. Local tensions collided with political unrest at national level in the run-up to the controversial presidential elections of March 2012. The unpopular president Abdoulaye Wade running for an illegal third mandate pushed people throughout Senegal to protest throughout 2011 and early 2012. From October 2011, a common discussion among families in Medina Diallobé was the worrying possibility of '*année blanche*' when, following significant disruptions, the state declares the academic year nul and no one moves up a grade. Although lessons in Medina Diallobé resumed in January after the *lycée* pupils' strike ended, by mid-February 2012 another strike was announced, by *collège* and *lycée* teachers. A pupil had assaulted a teacher. Teachers demanded that the boy be expelled, but no punishment was delivered. The strike continued, but under the umbrella of the national teachers' union campaign as salaries had not been paid. Teachers in Medina Diallobé continued to give some classes, during one or two hours each morning. Eight teachers out of twenty-six were *vacataires* who taught as, paid hourly, they would not benefit from the strike. The school limped along at reduced pace until the Easter holidays in late March, finally resuming normal practice in mid-April after four months' disruption. *Année blanche* was never declared, but an unusually large proportion of pupils from Medina Diallobé failed the academic year.

The disruption of state schools stood in contrast to the steady pace of the *daaras*, whose *almudbe* continued to learn peacefully throughout the year. This comparison was made explicit by one *sanda* on the occasion of a pupil protest in February 2012 against the teacher strike. One morning my host family and I were roused by the sound of chanting and tam-tams banging. A large crowd of *collège* and *lycée* pupils was marching through the main streets of the village, after forcing teaching to stop in both primary schools, and finally blocking the main road of traffic for over an hour. Members of my host family discussed the commotion, and one resident *sanda* known for being a bit of a joker told me the *almudbe* were having a strike tomorrow. Everyone present erupted in giggles, as such an idea was clearly unthinkable.

5.3 Leaving school to work: Boys who drop out of *collège*

Although the *collège* and *lycée* are available in the village, the following tables demonstrate that not everyone attends. With respect to boys, numbers of pupils enrolled in Medina Diallobé in 2010/2011 show two trends. Firstly, there is under-enrolment of boys who ever enrol in *collège*, the evidence being that there are half as many boys enrolled as girls in the first year (*6ème*). The second trend is a slow but steady male drop-out throughout secondary school course.

Table 5.1 Enrolment statistics by sex and grade for Medina Diallobé collège, academic year 2010/2011.

	6ème	5ème	4ème	3ème
Girls	102	74	74	46
Boys	64	60	52	51
Total	166	134	126	97

Table 5.2 Enrolment statistics by sex and grade for Medina Diallobé lycée, academic year 2010/2011.

	2ème	1er
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Girls	71	32
Boys	65	22
Total	136	54

Despite the discourses circulating among parents and pupils of economic utility of post-primary school, many boys' narratives suggest that the promise of obtaining work immediately is more attractive. This is linked to pressure on men to be breadwinners. Their masculinity and desirability as husbands rests on their ability to provide. As one Pulaar proverb states, "*Gorko soofataa, wasat*" - a man is only ugly when poor. The fact that men can no longer rely on inheriting and working their family land to sustain a household means they must work for cash over several years. They often have to wait until their thirties or even forties to afford to marry for the first time. Finding work is therefore a constant consideration for young men. Kalidou Ndiaye, a bright and studious 24-year-old *ceddo* in terminal year of *lycée*, explained how seeking work conflicted with long-term study. His discourse is similar to that of *sharia* student, Malik Ba, quoted in the previous chapter:

Sometimes I don't know why I study, like where is it all leading? Life is so short. We are constantly thinking of our family, our parents. All they have suffered to help us, and I want to help them in turn, to ensure the dignity of the family. Those concerns weigh on you so heavily sometimes that it's hard to concentrate on your studies.

Given the demands on boys to earn money, they often work in the weekly market or *luumo* while attending school. Koïta, the director of Medina Diallobé II, said he sees many of his pupils, both girls and boys, working there on Fridays. This trend is often followed by boys especially leaving school after primary, or during *collège*, to work full-time. One 26-year-old *toorodo* man, Lamine, told me he quit school to work: "I did CM2, but as soon as I could earn money I left my studies. I work in the *luumo*, I buy and then sell on, and make a decent profit." Diallo, director of Medina Diallobé I, argued that "the *luumo* is big cause of boy's drop-out because they like to make money fast". He added:

We teachers have been talking about SCOFI²⁸ which encourages girls to come to school, but now we all say we need to encourage boys! Here, girls outnumber boys, double! Even triple! We teachers talk about it, but the state doesn't yet. There are no NGOs on it, I don't think.

Dropping out to work in petty trade is linked to later careers in trade in Dakar or further afield, a profession especially popular among *toorobe* men given the celebration of commerce in Islam, and its customary association with their category. Trade can then be a stepping stone to migrating. "School doesn't lead quickly to a job. So boys want to earn money fast, and go to Dakar. At the first occasion, they try and earn money," explained Thioye, director of the *collège*. "Petty trade, lots of big traders start like that, and get enough money to go to Europe." Several informants linked this low evaluation of school utility among some *toorodo* parents and adolescent boys to the fact that few men from Medina Diallobé have succeeded through this route to act as role models. Samba Ka stated:

What I have understood is that here in Medina Diallobé there are men in the older generation who never went to school but are very aware, they worked in hotels and as chauffeurs, and they got to know white people's ways. So they have a distinguished air, a noble air, because they had that training. So people until recently hadn't yet seen a model of someone who had gone through school and succeeded.

Oumoul, a 32-year-old *toorodo* woman who had married in Medina Diallobé but came from the nearby village of Wuro Mawdo, corroborated this trend:

There are lots of intellectuals from my village [Wuro Mawdo], dating from colonial times, not like here [Medina Diallobé] where it's recent, only among men in their fifties, like the mayor Ibrahima Sy. In my village, people have also decided that once they retire they will come back to their village to contribute to

²⁸ *Scolarisation des Filles* (SCOFI) is a project launched in the 1990s as part of the PDEF to address low female primary school enrolment. It has been credited with increasing enrolment of girls in the first year of primary, CI, from 38% in 1992 to 77% in 2000 (MEN 2001, p.15).

its development, this isn't so much the case here in Medina Diallobé. If people succeed in Dakar, they build a house there and stay there.

Most jobs young people in Medina Diallobé associate with school diplomas are low-paid positions, not perceived by *toorodo* boys in particular as worth the investment. "Here there aren't good role models for the pupils, so they don't value schooling much," said Thioye the *collège* director. "They see schooling, and they see what it leads to, they only see teachers, poorly paid civil servants, that doesn't interest them." In contrast to these jobs which are low in status and income, the attraction of migrating is much stronger, especially among *toorobe* who, as mentioned in the previous chapter, have the capital and networks to consider this route. "The youth see rich migrants who have gone abroad and build houses here and marry young girls, and that's what they want," Thioye argued. "I know three big houses in this neighbourhood being built by the most recent wave of migrants who went to the US. Those are the role models people see here." While the previous chapter showed how the most recent wave of migrants is advising their families to send children to school rather than the *daara*, the role model of the unschooled migrant still influences the current generation of adolescent boys' evaluations of secondary school, as Khadim Diop, *surveillant* at the *collège* stated:

With migration, men have gone to Europe or central Africa, they send money home, build a house, their families are comfortable. People see that, and say 'Well, we can succeed without school' - the myth of the school is finished. People have demystified it. Everyone knows you can succeed without going to French school. That's why certain boys, with the basics of primary school, can make their way through trade. These days, only money counts. And that you can have without going to school.

Migration and trade for *toorodo* boys can therefore be considered forms of "fallback employment" (Froerer 2011, p.704; Jeffrey et al. 2008, p.11), namely viable livelihoods young people know they can rely on which leads to lower investment in secondary schooling.

In contrast, men who have 'stayed behind' often defend their positions by putting forward negative discourses about migration. Thioye captures several prevalent

arguments, namely poor conditions, precarious legal status, and lack of family or marital life:

The youth don't realise the bubble is bursting, it's getting harder to go abroad. And what kind of life is it anyway?! You live in appalling conditions, often working picking fruit etc., treated like slaves. You save a bit. You can't go home for years because you have no papers so once you come home you can't go back again. Their wife sees no man for years, the man doesn't have wife abroad. Or sometimes the man has a wife abroad, or a partner who hosts them, but they are a kind of sexual slave to them. That's the reality, but the model of one migrant succeeding is enough to convince people.

Similar discourses are repeated by young men who are studying, and have a low likelihood of migrating, like Kalidou Ndiaye:

It's hard here, girls prefer to marry a migrant who has a nice house, rather than someone here like the director of a school, because he can't afford a huge house like that, or a car. So you get to thinking, what's the point of it all... Some girls only want money, though others say they want to marry a man who is here, they don't want someone abroad for twenty years. Some stay four years, others ten, twenty, some even die there. And they leave their wife here, that's not normal, she will become a prostitute. She has [sexual] needs, both men and women do, it's natural, and she will go elsewhere if you're not here to satisfy them.

However, the discourse celebrating international migration is even influencing the aspirations of boys who attend school, as Thioye explained: "School is seen as a trampoline to getting visas to be able to leave."

Some parents share their sons' evaluations, and do not mind if their son quits secondary school: "If a son says he wants to leave school and go to Dakar and work, parents will rarely refuse," said Thioye. However, in other cases parents value *collège* education but it is their sons who resist. This seems to be particularly the case among young *toorodo* men of the Ndaw village chieftaincy lineage, and others living in proximity to their neighbourhood. According to 40-year-old Habib Ndaw, from this family:

There is a tradition of education in this house, my father was one of the first to be schooled, but in the last few years the boys have been dropping out. My nephews don't go to school, they all dropped out. After CM2, or in *6ème* or *5ème*. When they drop-out, they have huge arguments with their parents, who do their best to take them to learn a trade so that they won't become vulnerable to social temptations.

The anti-school peer culture of young men who have dropped out exerts a strong influence on others who might wish to stay in school, as described by 24-year-old terminal *lycée* pupil Kalidou Ndiaye:

The problem here is that people don't have ambition, and they try to drag those who have ambition down. They say 'Who do you think you are? You're acting white.' They call you names, and it hurts. But I'm dedicated to studying.

For other young men, dropping out to work is less the pursuit of an alternative high status youth peer-group identity or to obtain a high-income profession, but due to constraints of direct or opportunity costs. This is exacerbated by high levels of grade repetition which means pupils can be well into their twenties before they finish *lycée*. For some boys, dropping out to work is directly tied to trouble affording enrolment fees and school materials. In 2011/2012, the annual registration fee for both *collège* and *lycée* in Medina Diallobé was 6000CFA (£7), equivalent to a bus journey to Dakar. Costs rise when factoring in materials such as stationery. Lewandowski (2011, p.47) estimates annual costs to be 12,000CFA (£14); one *surveillant* at the *collège* in Medina Diallobé suggested as much as 25,000-30,000CFA (£35), the same as a sack of rice to last a household one month. These costs do not include other expenses like having presentable clothes. For Chérif Konté, a 26-year-old *ceddo*, the costs of schooling had forced him to drop out after *5ème collège* at age 19:

My father lives in Sierra Leone, but never sends money. My grandmother paid for my school fees, I started quite late at age 9 or 10, and I completed three years. But then she couldn't afford it and I had no clothes to wear. I doubled CM1 and CM2. Then it was my teachers who forced me to study. To earn some

money, I did little jobs in the market on Fridays. I would go to the well and bring water to the market and sell cups for 10f, that's how I satisfied my little needs. Then I went into *collège* here. I missed the first three months, I couldn't pay the enrolment at 4000CFA [£5], and then you need eight or nine exercise books. After three months the director called me, the teachers had heard of my problems, they raised the money so I would go back. I had to repeat, so I did *6ème* again. My neighbours sometimes lent me clothes. So I did *5ème*. That's when I left, I made the decision then to not go to school anymore. Once I left school I became a welder.

I was unable to investigate systematically the extent to which financial constraints coincide with social category. As mentioned in Chapter Three, it is illegal for schools to collect data on the social category of pupils or teachers. However, I observed incidents which demonstrate that social category intersects with socioeconomic status and work burdens, and impinges on pupils' ability to stay in school. This information is of significant importance to international development actors, yet although the preference among clerical families for Islamic schools over secular state schools is well-documented in Senegal, there is no comprehensive analysis of the impact of social category identity constructions on inequalities in state school attendance and achievement.

One clear example is the case of 22-year-old Barro Cissé. Barro's mother, Penda, is *gallunkoodo*, and as a child her parents confided her care to *toorodo* Aïcha Tall in return for her domestic work. Although formalised slavery no longer exists in Senegal, clientelist relationships between freeborn and *gallunkoodo* families persist for reasons of interpersonal relationships and economic inequality. Penda married in Dakar, but retains strong ties of loyalty and affection to Aïcha's family because she grew up with them. Penda has several children including Barro, who explained to me that his father saw little value in school and wished instead for his sons to become apprentices in manual professions at the age of fifteen. Barro told me that he wanted to study as all his friends went to school, but his father was opposed, and his home was too crowded to concentrate well. However, Barro knew that the Tall family, his mother's patrons, valued schooling. In 2000 when aged 11, Barro asked Aïcha Tall whether he could live with her in Medina Diallobé and attend school there. Aïcha and her husband agreed to

host Barro and pay his school fees in return for his labour, and he has lived in the village with them since then.

Barro was in *2ème*, the first year of *lycée*, during my fieldwork. In return for board, lodging and school fees, Barro does all the masculine household work like slaughtering and butchering animals, taking the family's cow to pasture and minding the sheep. He told me he had not had a holiday in two years. When I saw him he was always working, while the *toorodo* sons of Aïcha Tall did no work, although some did study. "It's tough, going to school and doing all the chores. My friends complain that they never see me, but I can't leave the house even for two hours without someone needing me," Barro said. "I've asked the other boys to help more, but they just sit there. But you have to work yourself, not sit around watching others work." During the exam period in April, Barro was exhausted trying to revise alongside fulfilling his domestic workload, sleeping at 1am and waking at 6am. Other members of Aïcha's extended family even perceived this situation as unfair. They commented to me that Barro was a well-behaved and hard-working young man, and that Aïcha's own sons should work more, even accusing her behind her back of spoiling them.

This example contributes to debates surrounding the possibilities client families have to achieve social mobility through education. Schmitz (2009) documents the case of the village of Mboumba in the Futa Tooro, where clientelist relationships between the dominant *toorodo* families and their *gallunkoo*be in the 1950s enabled the latter to attend school and become teachers themselves. However, my findings from Medina Diallobé more closely resemble those of Morgan et al. (2010) who investigate whether the capital and information that parents in northern Nigeria obtained through clientelistic relationships with patron-employers made their children more likely to succeed in school. They concluded that no, rather client families gain little long-term as patron-client relationships exist ultimately to serve the interests of patron families and to suppress possibilities of social mobility. Clients' children were kept out of school if it was in the patron's interest. The case of Barro Cissé shows a similar dynamic. Barro willingly fulfils the duties he feels he owes to his *toorodo* host family in return for their support. In the short-term it has enabled him to study, which he would not have been able to do otherwise. But, in the long-run it threatens his academic success. His case clearly shows the ways in which social category relationships underpin clientelism in

the Haalpulaar context, and the effects it can exert on school trajectories. These processes are more complex than individual families being better or worse off than others. They reinforce the need for contextualised analyses of social relations in understanding socioeconomic status and its links to inequalities in school outcomes.

When abandoning school, young men adjust their evaluations depending on their shifting circumstances, which is reflected in Barro Cissé's account. I interviewed him in October 2011 at the start of the academic year, when he voiced a fairly typical pro-school, anti-migration discourse, arguing that diplomas represent a better economic investment, and more morally righteous path enabling him to contribute to Senegal's development:

If I get my bac, I'd like to train, either in medicine or in the police. Those are the two things I can think of. I thought of medicine because you can help people, and there aren't many good doctors here. I'd like to study abroad, but then come back to help my village. [...] In 2009 I thought of quitting school. To go elsewhere to find work. Half of my friends quit at the end of primary to look for work. But I said to myself, leaving school to go elsewhere isn't easy. And if you have no occupation, and you migrate, you still won't find any work there. I thought, you can start your activities in the holidays and if it works, you quit school, if not, you stay on. Plus, migrating requires money. If you don't have money, you can't migrate. So I prefer to continue with my studies to succeed and have something. I don't think of migrating. People say there's no work in Senegal, but it's just that it's work people don't want to do. You can't be in a country where there's work to be done, and talk about migrating. And there are many people who have left for twenty years and never returned. I reckon one reason is that they didn't find work, they failed, and can't afford to come back.

However, by April 2012, after months of strikes, and his heavy domestic workload interfering with his revision schedule, Barro was less optimistic about school. He told me he was considering dropping out to migrate instead:

Année blanche has been declared in Louga and Ziguinchor, so it will happen in the rest of the country too, probably. And the universities are full of people who

aren't well taken care of, they're not moving on a year either. Loads of people have the bac in Senegal, it doesn't mean anything anymore. I've been thinking of going to Congo, there are people I know there. I would just need money for the visa. I'll finish this year though, and see how it goes.

I quizzed him, reminding him how he had said that dropping out of school and emigrating were bad ideas. "That was then," he replied glumly, "but this is now, with all the political problems and so on." Six months after I left Medina Diallobé in 2012, Barro told me had dropped out because he was "disillusioned". Three years on, in 2015, he is still trying to raise money to pay for a Congolese visa.

5.4 The competing ideals of marriage and schooling: Girls who drop out of *collège*

5.41 Girls' and their parents' preferences

To complement the data on why boys drop out of *collège* and *lycée*, the following section considers girls' experiences. The majority of unmarried adolescent girls in Medina Diallobé – and even some married ones – attend secondary schools. The exceptions are the daughters of Ceerno Alfa Sy, a cleric who still considers state school inappropriate for girls for spreading immoral behaviour, and isolated cases of very poor families, girls who find school especially challenging, or those with disabilities. However, female dropout throughout the secondary school course is steep, and more acute than of boys. As seen in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 in section 5.3, despite girls outnumbering boys three to one in the first year of *collège*, by the terminal year of *lycée*, numbers of girls and boys are roughly equal. Less than half of girls enrolled at the start of *collège* remain by the end of *lycée*. In contrast to other areas of Senegal (Seck 2011), few girls drop out due to extra-marital pregnancy; only four such cases were identified in the *collège* in 2010/2011 out of three hundred female pupils. Teachers state that girls start to drop out from age fifteen mainly in order to marry – although marriage can be used to mask the shame of financial constraints and difficulties experienced in school. The following two sections consider the complex negotiations surrounding girls' marriage and drop-out.

The recent institution of secondary state school plays a powerful role in shaping young women's aspirations, and community attitudes towards girls' schooling. The school personnel are the main actors advocating in favour of girls' secondary education, and argue that it is useful for women to have income-generating options to then delay marriage or be less dependent on their husbands. 18-year-old *toorodó* Hadja told me the director put up a sign in school saying "Diplomas are a husband who will never leave you." All teachers I spoke to considered that every case in which a girl drops out of school to marry is categorically negative, but although they counselled girls if they came to them for help they did not intervene in family affairs. Throughout the year, pupils' groups also organised extra-curricular activities promoting girls' attendance at school. In 2011, *lycée* pupils organised a Fosco or 'Foyer Socio-Culturel' lasting two days, including a speech by the *collège* director on the causes of girls' drop-out, and theatre sketches against forced marriage. An association of university students in Dakar, called an *Amicale*, also returned to the village to do a three-day 'caravane' of promotion, advocating in favour of girls' schooling and against their dropping out in order to marry.

Parents and girls also see value in girls' secondary education. Many parents send their daughters to secondary school approving of the idea that they might earn money for themselves and their families. Samba Ka was of the opinion that "When parents decide to educate their daughter they usually think of French school because they think of the possibility of making money." Mothers who were not able to finish their own studies are especially in favour of their daughters studying and eventually working. This was the case of Binetou Dem, a 32-year-old *toorodó* with a 12-year-old daughter. "You should get your bac, go to university, get what you want before marrying. You shouldn't rush into it. *Dewgal yawataa*, marriage shouldn't be rushed, you shouldn't be in a hurry. That's what I hope for my daughter." Female pupils are often highly ambitious, expressing the desire to finish their studies and train in high-status jobs. 16-year-old Houley in *6ème* wants to be a doctor; 13-year-old Nene "an ambassador and a fashion designer." 18-year-old Hadja in *3ème* stated:

In the past in the Futa people said 'Girls' place is in the kitchen, just stay at home cooking all day.' But now everyone knows schooling is good, children have built houses and taken their parents to Mecca. If you have children now,

you'll send them to school, it's the way it is. And there are even more girls than boys, and the girls are smarter.

However, in addition to the attraction of the school for its income-generating potential, in Medina Diallobé as in Senegal more widely, marriage is central to dominant constructions of femininity. A proverb “*Debbo yoodata ko dewgal*”, roughly translated as ‘a woman’s beauty comes through marriage’, exemplifies the importance of the institution for girls’ sense of self. Marriage confers important status on a girl or young woman, and the wedding celebration is one of the most significant in her lifetime. Essentially, while girls and their parents are in favour of girls completing studies and working, they are also in favour of marriage – and it is difficult to combine these two ideals. Oumoul Wane, a 32-year-old *toorodo* primary school teacher, stated plainly “It’s engrained in the society to educate girls, but also to marry them.” In practice therefore, many girls get married before completing school.

A significant factor influencing why girls marry before finishing school is prevalent ideals about the appropriate age at which they should marry. Most people feel girls can be married from the age of fifteen, and according to Islamic prescriptions ought to be married as soon as possible thereafter to control female sexuality and minimise the risk of shame through the sins of fornication or extra-marital pregnancy. As Bachir Wane, a 26-year-old *toorodo* man, said: “Girls after age fifteen are seen as being at risk of adultery. So many people, to be in keeping with the religion, try and marry their daughters once they are fifteen.” He added, “If I had to choose between practising my religion and studies, I would choose my religion!” The preference to marry girls from the age of fifteen seems to be stronger among *toorobe*, as Ismaila Gueye, *baylo lycée* teacher, suggested when I asked whether there were many *waylube* girls who dropped out of school to marry:

It’s more common in other neighbourhoods, especially those who apply the *sharia* the most. Well, I know the Qur’an is the sacred book but I also know that God said you can go to China to seek knowledge, and there was no Qur’an there then! So God was talking about seeking other knowledge like school, it’s good, God likes it all. But maybe their interpretation is that school isn’t good as it changes you, you’ll lose your religion. They still think that girls are made for

marrying, they must submit to their husband. Especially in clerical families you see this.

Most marriages which took place during my fieldwork, and five years beforehand, involved girls aged between fifteen and twenty. At the other extremes, I heard of two girls married at age twelve, and a handful attending university who were unmarried in their mid-twenties. Their husbands are usually ten to fifteen years older than them, although if they are second, third or fourth wives, their husbands could be up to twenty-five years their senior. Marriages are strictly endogamous by social category²⁹, preferably between cousins, although a marriage with another family across looser kinship ties is not uncommon.

Within marriage, women are expected to take on domestic and reproductive roles. Even for women who work, having children immediately upon marriage is expected, and childbearing contributes to women's social status. As Moussa Dem explains:

For girls, the most important thing in life is to get married. It's partly an economic thing because women are obliged to have a husband financially. But also, we see that women in Europe, many of them don't ever marry or even want to have children. Women here would say 'What's the point of life then?!' Here, if a woman doesn't have children it's very sad because it's through that that she has a social role.

Yagouba Sy, a 22-year-old *toorodo* man, suggested that long-term studies have few certain returns for girls, and can be a barrier to the more important ideal of childbearing: "When will you finish your studies? You don't even know! Like you, you're still studying! Studying can go on forever." He added "It's not good to wait too long, if you do, the menopause will come and you won't be able to have many children. It's not good to wait until thirty or thirty-five because it doesn't leave much time." Among the families I knew, few women used family planning as they were unsure of its legitimacy within Islam, and suspected it could negatively affect their fertility over time. Those

²⁹ I knew of no cross-category marriages in Medina Diallobé, although one *toorodo* informant, Cheikhna Sylla, told me that his sister had married a *baylo* man in another town. I did however hear rumours of a few cross-category extramarital affairs and illegitimate pregnancies.

who used it did so to space births every three years rather than delay a first pregnancy. Women and men both state that women need their husband's permission to use contraception.

This model of femininity linked to young marriage, domesticity and child-bearing is promoted by the vast majority of people in Medina Diallobé. Contrary to their explicit discourse promoting girls' long-term study for employment, some school personnel simultaneously reinforce gender constructions which link a woman's status to her domestic role and financial dependence on men. Teachers appointed gender-specific tasks like having girls sweep classrooms, and textbooks as well as homework examples portrayed women as wives and mothers while men worked. One of the *collège* teachers, Hawa Thiam, advocated in favour of girls' schooling, but also constantly asked me why I wasn't yet married. "Don't you want a husband?!" she exclaimed. She explained how she got married while at university because she "was afraid of being called 'an old girl'." Pupils' own activities like Fosco which promote schooling for girls also include beauty pageants, female dance performances, or having girls act mainly in supportive roles as hostesses. "It's the culture, the natural order of things!" explained *collège* director Thioye:

There are some tasks for boys, but in general sweeping is for girls. It's not something official, but the natural order returns. The man must work and seek money. The division of labour is such that women do housework. That is embedded, all social organisation is based on that. You can't imagine a man doing washing up! That is shameful! As if she wears the trousers and you wear the skirt! Like you can say a woman should succeed in school and do further studies, but contrarily there is this idea that a woman's social success is not to have a PhD but to be beside a man. A woman can't be happy if she doesn't have a husband. The woman who has succeeded in her studies but hasn't found a husband, she will be traumatized for life, she has failed in her role as a woman. You can work, you can access everything, but if you haven't a husband, you have failed.

Girls are strongly influenced by these ideals, and the desire for both marriage and diplomas is apparent among them. Zeinab, a 22-year-old *toorodo*, who was repeating

terminal year of *lycée*, happily told me one day in May 2012 that she had been married in the mosque. She asked me whether I was married to which I replied, “No, I’m still studying.” Zeinab exclaimed, “But it’s good to have a husband! To have diplomas *and* a husband is the best!” Thioye the *collège* director explained: “Girls themselves are often ok with it, they want to get married. Once a few in their age group at age fifteen get married, then all the rest want to. Or, by the time they are twenty or so, they consider themselves old, and want to get married.”

In some cases, though, parents and extended families force marriage upon their daughters. Aminata Sylla, a *toorodo* aged 22 in terminal year of *lycée*, told her story:

My family tried to force me to marry my cousin when I was seventeen. I said ‘No, I’m an intellectual, I want to finish my studies’, and they wanted to marry me to a cousin who has no education and not even a job. My family said ‘You’re undisciplined and stubborn.’ I cried and cried. I want to finish the bac. And after that, get a job, whatever job I want. And I will sign a contract with my husband so that he lets me! I want to be able to satisfy all my needs and those of my children. But here in the Futa, they’re so traditional, it’s not easy. That side of my family still doesn’t speak to me anymore.

Even where girls are not exactly forced, there is huge pressure to acquiesce to parents’ expectations, which girls often submit to. Fatimata Ndaw, a 20-year-old *toorodo* in terminal year of *lycée* told me “It’s tough for pupils here, we’re pressured to get married early, like fourteen or fifteen. Some succeed to the end of school but it’s few. My mother’s always going on about getting married, but I want to get a job afterwards, to earn money and have a life.” Nine months later, she finally agreed to marry due to her mother’s insistence. There is also huge pressure on girls as well as parents to agree to a suitor’s proposal, especially if he is kin. One such case is 19-year-old *toorodo*, Soumaya Hanne, who at fifteen became the second wife of her cousin, twenty-two years her senior. She separated from him three years later, and returned home. She told me how the engagement happened, and that she felt pressured to agree: “I was young and I was too embarrassed to say no. Even though my friends said he was old, and it’s polygamy, and I had no feelings towards him at all, I was too shy to say no.” Her parents felt equally bound by custom to agree to the marriage. Soumaya’s mother and father had

both wanted their daughter to succeed at school and earn money as none of their other children had done so. Her mother, Codou, explained:

You see here when someone asks for your daughter, especially of the same family, it's hard... He sticks to the girl like glue and never leaves her be. He'll invite her over all the time, and if a girl doesn't know how to defend herself, it's hard. Like to say, 'I'm studying', or 'it's too soon'... And then she agrees to it, and in a week she's married.

In an unusual display of resistance, Codou had covertly obtained Soumaya an arm implant to avoid her falling pregnant. She encouraged her to come home when her husband tried to prevent her from studying, and advised her to make unrealistic material demands as an ultimatum on continuing the marriage knowing that her son-in-law would not be able to comply. Most parents I met would not interfere like this, believing that within Islam they lose any right to authority over their daughter after her marriage.

5.42 Husbands' and in-laws' influence

Given the personal value and status attached to being married, the social pressure to accept a suitor's offer, and the potential economic returns associated with school diplomas, many young women – often with their parents' support - try to have the best of both worlds by marrying and trying to continue at school once married. From 2007, the Ministry of Education ruled that girls could re-enter school after giving birth (MEN 2007). However, balancing school and marriage is extremely difficult in practice, because girls' – and even their parents' – desires to have them study and work often conflict with their husbands' or in-laws' wishes. Many young women who abandoned school after marriage told me they had agreed to the engagement on the condition that they could continue their studies, and that their husbands and in-laws had agreed, but once married it became impossible with the burdens of housework and childcare. Young married women have the duty to perform all domestic work in their in-laws' household, including going to the market, fetching water, cooking, cleaning, child-rearing and doing laundry. Older women pass these duties on to their daughters, who are not required to shoulder as much burden as daughters-in-law. Young wives share cooking

and other domestic duties equally with their co-wives and/or sisters-in-law, each working two consecutive days before taking days off. This distribution of labour was cited by several people as an incentive for women to marry into polygamous unions, and to have children as early as possible to take over their workload.

Rabia, a 24-year-old *toorodo* from another village who had married Issa Kane when she was eighteen and in *4ème collège*, was a typical case of a girl who had dropped out of school because of housework burdens despite her parents wanting her to continue. “My father, who is a cleric, wanted me to continue school, so did I, to be able to have something of my own,” she explained. “They discussed that before the wedding and my husband accepted. But once I was married and moved to my husband’s house and wanted to go to school, my husband said you have to cook.” In cases like this, parents rarely get involved. Many I spoke with consider that within Islam a girl becomes the responsibility of her husband once married, and is required to obey him under all circumstances.

Statements from several of my informants demonstrate that often the pressure husbands place on their wives to leave school to fulfil their domestic duties is an indirect strategy to prevent them from obtaining diplomas, and thus well-paid jobs. It is not unusual for women in Medina Diallobé to earn money *per se*; many aged between twenty and fifty contribute to household budgets despite local norms that men are responsible for household expenses and a woman’s earnings are her own. The financial support that working women provide their families is not limited to spheres typically considered feminine like buying clothes for themselves and their children, supplementing food budgets, or buying medicines. The more successful traders and salaried women also contribute to paying the rent and bills, building and decorating their houses, and paying their children’s school and university fees. These women’s cases are particular, as they are either widows, or their husbands are international migrants, and in one case a school teacher, who are more exposed to the idea of women working. In general there is not a strong tradition of women from Medina Diallobé, least of all *toorodo* women, working in salaried posts, and men living in the village tend to be opposed. Samba Ka argued that this is linked to constructions of masculinity and men seeking to prevent their wives from working in order to maintain control over them:

Lots of men say to their wives before they marry ‘You can continue your studies’. But technically, if you agree to that, in the *sharia* you have to make the conditions that enable her to do so. But in reality, those who don’t want her to continue won’t make that effort. Because continuing studies reduces the hold the husband has on the wife, that’s my interpretation, it gives a woman the ability to escape their control. Men, according to Islam, are the head of the household. Women can work in Islam, but there is a cultural undercurrent which isn’t Islamic. There’s a bit of jealousy and an idea of controlling the women. The woman shouldn’t have to contribute anything to the household, but she has the right to work. As it is, in a marriage the husband brings everything financially, so that’s a system of domination, there is the idea that if I bring the resources then I have the right to make the rules. If a man brought some and a woman more, she would have more right. But the men would never accept that. Before, money came from fields, which belonged to men. Well these days, there is friction with modernity, and now people accept that women go to school. They know it’s not men who have everything, women notice that they can work and have possibilities like men.

Indeed, Yagouba Sy, a 22-year-old *toorodo* explained how men’s social dominance rests on their earning more money than women:

It makes sense that men make all the decisions because they contribute the money in the relationship and take care of the women in their household. Plus, in any relationship, work or whatever, you need one person to be in a position of authority for it to work, if both are equal it will never work, you need a superior and an inferior.

Some *toorodo* men in particular hold a very strong discourse against women working outside the home. This was evident in a conversation I had with Malik Ba, 22-year-old *toorodo sharia* student mentioned in the previous chapter:

Me: Can girls work? They have diplomas now.

Malik: What kind of work?

Me: Anything!

Malik: You know here, women don't work. They get married and then it's their role to stay around the kitchen.

Me: But what's the point of them studying then? In my country we study to find work afterwards.

Malik: Here we don't study to work, it's for knowledge, to live better, to know important things. A girl of twenty, you have to find her a husband. She could study for a bit longer, but it's not easy once she's married.

Me: But why don't they work?

Malik: Here in the Futa it's rare to see a woman who works. It's not part of our culture, it's part of yours, but not part of ours. And she would need permission from her husband which isn't easy. For example, in our family, no girl has *ever* worked. I would *never* accept my wife to have a job, never!! Even if I *die* I will provide for the family. That's how it is, the man provides.

Me: But you'll tire yourself out! Why not let her work and help with the expenses?

Malik: Never, *never*!

Me: What about teaching? Or looking after children?

Malik: I would never let her go outside of the house and *work*.

Me: What if she taught the Qur'an?

Malik: Hmm... if she does it *inside the house*. But *not* outside.

Me: Why not?

Malik: Because people will say that you have no control over your wife, that she controls you.

Me: It would be shameful.

Malik: Yes.

This strong aversion among *toorodo* men to women working reflects the combined influence of constructions of masculine and social category identity. The previous chapter showed how Malik complains about the pressure on him to be a breadwinner, and his statements above show how this strain is exacerbated as he feels his honour as a *toorodo* man demands that his wife enjoy the privilege of the nobility of not working.

In general, schooled *toorodo* men in their teens and early twenties seem more prepared than their *daara*-educated peers, and older generation of men, to allow their wives to

work outside the home. This is possibly because they have more likelihood of obtaining formal sector work and thus see less threat to their masculinity. Nonetheless, they often talk of controlling how much money they would allow their wives to earn in order to maintain their position of social dominance. When I asked what kind of girl he wanted to marry, Aliou Watt, an 18-year-old *toorodô* in *4ème collège* explained:

Ideally she'll finish school first. She'll be an intelligent girl, someone who has studied, not a savage! Not someone who knows nothing. And I don't mind if she works. Some men don't want their wife to work but it's good, it's easier to pay the expenses. But I don't want a woman who tells me what to do. There are some women who run their husband, they say 'Wash the bowls'! And they have to do it. If I had a wife like that, I would divorce her! I'll have lots of money and if I have lots of money she'll do what I say. Or I'll get a maid, that's the best.

Hence, those young men who entertain the idea of their wife working do so as long as they feel they can earn more than her. They would refuse to do any housework constructed as feminine, namely childcare, cooking, fetching water, doing the washing up or laundry, but hope to find a maid to do these things instead. Through this strategy, boys, like Yagouba Sy quoted below, hope to maintain their financial dominance and hence decision-making authority, negotiating around the threat women's paid work poses to their position of male superiority:

Me: But who will do the housework if your wife's working?

Yagouba: We can pay a maid.

Me: But that's expensive.

Yagouba: No it's not...

Me: There are lots of men here who wouldn't accept that their wives work, why not?

Yagouba: They're afraid that if a woman has money she will ask for respect. If you tell her what to do she'll refuse, and because she has money she'll say she doesn't need you and will just go back to her parents' house.

Me: Aren't you afraid of that?

Yagouba: Yes, a bit. But the world has become so expensive, what with all the nice clothes and their nice colours, all that costs money! But both ways there are

problems, if she doesn't work and you can't give her what she wants, and if she does work. But having only one person work for the expenses is difficult.

The current generation of young women who abandon *collège* and *lycée* before obtaining diplomas once they get married therefore appears to be linked to their marrying an older generation of men generally aged thirty or over, who have predominantly studied in *daaras*, and strongly oppose women's salaried employment. It is possible that once the generation of young men in their teens and early twenties who currently attend school marries, they will be more open to choosing wives who have school diplomas.

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It is not necessarily only husbands who require that their wives give up school to do housework; in-laws also demand that the young wife performs their work responsibilities. Indeed, they can over-ride husbands who might support their wife's study or work outside the home: "Parents-in-law are a problem, even if the husband says his wife can continue studying, parents-in-law might give her lots of work to do" reckoned Adama Seck, a Wolof administrator. Indeed, the two cases I knew of in Medina Diallobé of girls who managed to continue attending school even after having children, were exceptional for being married to their first cousins, and living with their own mothers or grandmothers. Hence, their 'in-laws' were in fact their own female kin, who convinced their nephews/sons-in-law to allow their nieces to study, and also shouldered the childcare burden.

In individual cases, the conflicts between girls' aspirations to study and work, their husbands' views, and in-laws demands, all combine in unique ways. Girls' own views about marriage and schooling also shift over time, adjusting to their circumstances, as documented elsewhere (Froerer 2012). This process is exemplified in the case of Ramatoulaye, who dropped out of *1er lycée* at nineteen when she married Cheikhna Sylla, a 38-year old migrant working in Spain who had the baccalaureate. When I first asked Ramatoulaye why she had left school, she implied in her account that she had been powerless to alter the timing of the wedding:

The wedding was set for the start of June and the exams were meant to be the end of May but that year there were lots of strikes and the exams got delayed. And once the date of the wedding is set you can't really change it. So what with the preparation for the wedding and the honeymoon afterwards I missed the exams. And then I got pregnant so I couldn't continue. If I had done *Ier* I would have had just one year of school left. It's a shame as I loved my studies and considered it above anything else.

However, I heard a slightly different version of events from her husband Cheikhna which suggests that Ramatoulaye had preferred marriage over finishing school, but only later changed her mind: "Well, I said she should finish, but you know how they are... She wasn't that motivated at the time." His younger sister Aminata gave more details:

Look at her, Ramatoulaye, she dropped out, and now regrets it, her life is ruined. I hear her crying in her room. And she was in *Ier*, one step away from finishing, so close. But it was her fault. Cheikhna wanted her to succeed and finish *Ier*. But she dropped out before the wedding and didn't tell Cheikhna who was still in Spain. When he came for the wedding he found out and said, 'What's going on, you've lied to me'. He also gave her contraceptive pills, and said 'I can't force you, it's your decision.' She refused though, she said she wanted a child in her life. But now she regrets it all. She wants to go back to school but Cheikhna refused this time, he said it's too late. She only has the BFEM, it's nothing.

Ramatoulaye was disappointed at having missed out on her schooling, but seems to have developed this attitude after becoming disillusioned with married life alongside her in-laws and onerous work burden. One day in June I visited the compound where Cheikhna's elderly parents lived with their three married sons, their wives and children, and six younger unmarried children. It was the height of the hot season, and tempers were fraying. There were no smiles, the four young wives were running to and fro frantically washing clothes and cooking, while minding fourteen children under the age of twelve including several toddlers and wailing babies. Ramatoulaye said she was exhausted, her two-year-old son demanded her constant attention, and she just wanted to rest. "But here if you're not constantly working people accuse you of being lazy. They treat you like a slave. Whatever I do they find reason to criticise." I often saw her

fighting back tears. “I love my husband and he loves me, so I put up with a lot,” she added. “I want to make the marriage work so I do all I’m supposed to do with a smile and I never complain, but it’s just a brave face.” Not giving up hope, Ramatoulaye made constant efforts to find ways to continue her studies, and pursue her dream of being a doctor. She sought information on how to do a two-year training course in St Louis, got to know the personnel of the health centre to inquire about informal training, asked me and an NGO she knew for financial support, and approached her aunt about childcare.

In this case, I knew Ramatoulaye’s husband Cheikhna well enough to ask his opinion of her doing a training course and working. Being schooled himself, he said he wasn’t opposed in theory but the issue was more his family and their view of his wife’s work responsibilities in the extended household:

Rama talked to me about continuing school, but it would cause problems. My brothers’ wives are in the house too, they don’t want to do her work in her place. If there is a woman in the house and she’s married, she has the duty to do cooking on her two days. You see, if one goes to school, the others say ‘Well if you’re doing something, I want something’. If someone goes to school, who will work their two days? That will cause problems. People can’t forgive that. There are people who think like this, and say ‘*o accii suudu mum*, she has abandoned her room, or responsibilities’. And ‘*ina hersinii* – it’s shameful’. It’s like saying they’ve not respected their duties. Especially if a woman earns money, it will only go into her pocket, she doesn’t add it to the household expenses because a woman isn’t obliged to. So her husband has to continue paying for everything. People don’t see the interest in having her study as she will gain and others will have to do her cooking, there is this problem of jealousy. And so if Ramatoulaye were to do that, go and study, no one in the house would speak to her. They would ostracise her. And then what would happen? You know, it’s not me causing the problem! Or her. It’s the people who are there in the house, who decide ultimately. She asked me to negotiate with them but I can’t intervene, it’s complicated. And since it’s African society, we have family ties and if you try and go against it, everyone is against you, you’re isolated. And we’re educated in the way of union and community, and once they put you aside you feel bad.

These cases show that the Ministry of Education's policy of allowing girls with children to re-enter school will only facilitate their reintegration into the system if accompanied by alternative childcare arrangements and, more importantly, a cultural shift in which people value married women's schooling and salaried employment over their domestic work.

While cases like Ramatoulaye's are common, where young women want both marriage and schooling but become disillusioned when the two cannot be reconciled, there are some instances when girls do genuinely want to leave school, preferring the comfort and status of domestic lifestyle especially if their husband is financially secure. Bachir Wane, a 28-year-old *toorodo* man stated: "There are plenty of girls who want to drop out, they're tired of studying. Especially once they get married, but even before they get married. Marriage is a priority for girls, rather than finishing their studies." Ismaila Gueye, 28-year-old *lycée* teacher, stated that the income-generating potential of studies for girls was ambiguous: "In Europe you know that if you make an effort in your studies, that you will succeed. But that's not the case here. The main thing is that you try. So if someone comes and proposes to marry you, well it depends, it might be worth it."

In some rare cases, young women may even go up against their parents and in-laws to achieve this domestic ideal. One woman, Diamilatou Sy, was one such case: at age twenty and in *4ème collège* she married her first cousin, Ablaye, an affluent migrant working in Gabon. Diamilatou was in a position uniquely conducive to continuing her studies as her mother, Astou, and husband's sister, Oumou, went to great lengths to convince Ablaye to let his wife remain in school. Astou cared for Diamilatou's baby son, enabling her to reach *1er collège* by age 24. However, tired of balancing school with childcare and domestic work, missing her husband, and not foreseeing many significant economic returns from schooling given that her husband was already well-off, Diamilatou secretly arranged with Ablaye to get her a visa to join him in Gabon. Astou and Oumou disapproved, arguing that she would be more secure if she had the possibility to work, but three years on Diamilatou has had a second child, and no regrets about being a housewife at her husband's side in Gabon.

5.5 Conclusion

In contrast to the previous chapter on parents who prefer *daaras*, this chapter analyses preference for state school among Medina Diallobé's inhabitants. Most consider primary school to have unquestioned value for basic socialisation and for skills needed in contemporary society. However, value of post-primary schools is more ambiguous, not least given disruptions to the school sector and the fact that few men from the village have used school diplomas to obtain high-status professions. Engagement with post-primary state school enables us to challenge the assumption presented in Chapter One that people prefer state schools for economic benefits, and that income is the main or only factor they consider. While many parents do send their children to secondary school for perceived economic value, many boys abandon in favour of immediate income-generating opportunities which confer quicker masculine status as breadwinners. Boys from *toorodo* lineages, for whom the high-status "fallback" professions of trade and migration are more accessible, are most conspicuous in seeking an anti-school youth identity.

For girls, attending post-primary school for economic incentives also competes with constructions of gender identity, as feminine status is tied to marriage, childbearing, and economic dependence on a husband. Again, gender constructions intersect with social category as this ideal appears particularly strong among *toorobe* who historically associate women's not working outside the home with nobility and privilege. Hence, not only is secondary school perceived by pupils as not conferring significant economic benefits, but their decisions are motivated as much by issues of status and identity informed by gender and social category constructions as income-generation. Notably, a state-school model of the educated person is not necessarily the principle identity people pursue. The relative influence of different factors on people's decisions also shift over time when faced with new developments in personal circumstances.

This chapter also challenges the assumption presented in Chapter One that fathers in nuclear families exert most influence over their children's educational trajectories. Boys who go against their parents' wishes demonstrate the influence of peer cultures on their decisions. A multiplicity of actors, from school personnel, parents, extended family, husbands and in-laws, all contribute to shaping girls' aspirations and trajectories. As in

the previous chapter, migrants - as fathers but also uncles, nephews, cousins or brothers - strongly influence family decisions because they pay most household expenses. Their demand for schooled wives strongly influences girls' schooling and their marriage age. In addition to extended family, young people's own agency is important, including to resist or pursue marriages; negotiate to continue or leave school; or engage in educational activities outside or after school. These findings call for greater attention to be paid to young people's agency and embeddedness in social networks to understand their educational trajectories, and their implications for development projects which aim to assist people who wish to stay in school but face barriers in doing so.

These insights expose barriers to distributive educational justice, namely unequal access to the benefits of existing educational options. Despite the fact many young people drop out of secondary school to pursue more attractive alternatives, others would like to continue but are unable to do so for reasons relating to constructions of gender and socioeconomic status. For girls obliged to drop out of school against their desires, it is essential for education providers to recognise that female in-laws, such as mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law and co-wives, as much as male family members, play decisive roles in facilitating or inhibiting girls' pursuit of schooling alongside marriage, by monitoring their work and childcare. This is relevant to the state's recent attempts to change the law permitting girls who have given birth to re-enter the school system. This move is unlikely to respond to the desires of women with children who wish to complete their schooling, if cultural values surrounding their domestic responsibilities do not also change.

Forced drop-out from secondary school is also linked to economic constraints. Lack of access to wealth is affected by historical inequalities and current clientelist relations, influenced by social category identity. The influence of these factors challenges narrow economic definitions of household socioeconomic status as a way of making sense of inequalities in education outcomes, described in Chapter One. These findings call for more nuanced accounts of how deprivation leads to people abandoning school than is commonly employed in economic studies. Current measures of income treat households as isolated rather than as embedded within relationships. Future research on education in West Africa needs to consider how people's access to wealth is affected by inherited

assets, access to well-paid professions and clientelistic relationships, and how these intersect with legacies of social category inequalities.

The following chapter complements these findings by looking at young people who do persevere to obtain the BFEM and baccalaureate diplomas.

Chapter 6. Attending state school (II): Pursuing diplomas

6.1 Introduction

In contrast to the previous chapter on pupils who do not complete *collège*, this chapter analyses those who invest in the BFEM and baccalaureate diplomas, their assessments of the value of school, and their ability to realise their desired trajectories depending on their gender, social category, and wealth. Section 6.2 looks at how school attendance is considered by the current generation of young people from *baylo* and *gallunkoodo* families of the Mbayla neighbourhood to have high material value. This high valorisation of school among Mbayla parents and young people must be understood in the context of their being constructed by the *toorobe* as socially inferior, excluded from the valued Islamic knowledge of the *daara*, and marginalised from economic wealth and political power in the village. This counters common official assumptions that social category identity does not come into play in the school setting.

Section 6.3 considers middle-class *toorodo* women, another group of young people increasingly being encouraged by their parents to pursue diplomas, university degrees and formal sector employment. This situation is celebrated by development actors, along the assumption that it will encourage greater female financial independence, autonomy and decision-making authority. However, this section counters these assumptions by demonstrating barriers girls face in converting their diplomas into such benefits. First is the pressure *toorodo* parents place on their daughters to marry against their wishes. Second are customary restrictions on the kinds of work considered appropriate for *toorodo* women which limit the range of professions they can pursue. Those less well-off therefore face additional challenges to convert their diplomas into income-generating opportunities free of stigma.

Section 6.4 describes how young people in general are differentially positioned in terms of accessing wealth, information, and contacts which enable them to convert their diplomas into employment. Most families in Medina Diallobé cannot easily afford higher education and other training opportunities which facilitate insertion into the formal economy. Hence, parents and young people are obliged to seek help from wealthier patrons, namely the local *toorodo* politicians employed outside the village as

high-ranking civil servants. In turn, these actors use dissemination of school-related favours to further their political positions, which is illustrated through the example of allocation of *vacataire* teacher positions to certain favoured families. Unpacking how favours flow within local clientelist networks reveals the complex, and not necessarily linear, interrelationships between social category, lineage and wealth on the one hand, and social mobility through schooling on the other.

6.2 Educated persons: Mbayla inhabitants and the status of schooling

Young people pursuing post-secondary school diplomas in Medina Diallobé hail from all social categories present in the village, and especially at baccalaureate level share a common camaraderie which surpasses these distinctions. However, in the *collège* and *lycée*, both male and female inhabitants of the Mbayla neighbourhood in particular stand out as articulating a positive group identity based on academic success. Like many villages in the Futa Tooro, Mbayla is named after the *waylube* or smiths who live there. The Haalpulaar make a distinction between ‘black’ smiths (*waylube baleebe*) who forge iron or black metal, and jewellers (*waylube sayakoobe*) who work with gold and silver (Dilley 2004b, p.40). In Medina Diallobé, the *waylube* specialise in the latter profession. Like other neighbourhoods dominated by one freeborn or artisan category, Mbayla is inhabited by families of *waylube*, but also the *gallunkoodo* families who used to be their slaves. In Medina Diallobé today, the *waylube* and *gallunkoobe* in Mbayla live in close proximity to each other, and enjoy strong and even affectionate friendship relations although intermarriage is strictly forbidden.

In one sense, the fact that pupils from Mbayla use the school space so obviously to celebrate their social category was surprising given frequent statements I heard from many teachers and other state personnel in Medina Diallobé that the school is a neutral, democratic space where social category does not come into play. “[Social category] doesn’t influence education, and has no influence on classroom dynamics”, Hawa Thiam, the *baylo collège* teacher told me. “At the level of school you can’t see a difference. All students are equal,” said Adama Seck, the Wolof administrator. “No one wants to know who the pupils are, they are distinguished by their ability in school, not by clan or ethnicity. As schooling is increasing, maybe mindsets are changing, so future

generations won't live this situation." he added. Khadim Diop, the *ceddo collègue surveillant* agreed: "School has done a lot to level these issues of caste. Anyone can be intelligent, even from an inferior caste." When I asked whether this is a deliberate policy or accidental effect of the school, he stressed that it was both: "On the one hand, someone might observe 'That person has succeeded but he is supposed to be inferior to me!' So the other says, 'Why can't I succeed too?' Also, we teach human rights, so pupils know that they are equal."

Young people I met also often stated that they ignore social category in their relationships and that it was not relevant to them. "Education is education," said 16-year-old *toorodo*, Houley, mentioned in Chapter Four for her resistance to her family's socialisation of *toorodo* superiority. "God didn't make this an issue, it's people. People did jobs, there were those who liked fishing, those who did smithing. But that's not what's important. Everyone is a person in the end. What's important is to have a job and be honest." Ismaila Gueye, 28-year-old *baylo lycée* teacher also explained:

Once in school, there is no longer any *toorodo*, *maccudo*... People even say today that outside of school there isn't even that. In any case what I've seen, I don't see *toorodo*, *baylo*, *maccudo*, we're all the same. [...] You will see a *baylo* who hangs out with a *maccudo*, or a *toorodo*. Like in friendship groups, and they date each other. You can't see who is who. Nearly all the castes are there. Each is proud of who he is, but no one says he is inferior or whatever, or that I am superior. So each respects the other. The caste problem, we have put it aside, you don't see it in school. Still, these days you can only marry the same, that still applies. Parents respect it until now, but from our generation we don't respect these divisions any more. You don't give me food or clothes or whatever, so you can no longer say you're superior to me. But in the past, a *maccudo* had to submit to a *toorodo*. The *toorodo* had to give him to eat and drink but the *maccudo* had to work. He was the lowest of the hierarchy. But that doesn't exist anymore. Each does what he can to survive.

Indeed, the middle-aged informants who I spoke with were generally of the opinion that these distinctions mattered less to young people than it had to their generation. However, other statements hinted that, despite the widespread nature of this egalitarian

discourse strongly linked to norms imparted within the school institution, some young people still hold to notions of social category superiority learned through family socialisation processes described in Chapter Four. For instance, although two young *toorodo* women I knew had *baylo* friends, on the rare occasions they visited their house, the other *toorodo* women there glared at them, treated them dismissively, and the atmosphere was very tense.

I therefore asked several Senegalese academics whether social category played an important role within the school space. Some Haalpulaar scholars suggested that based on historical evidence there might be visible examples of discrimination against *ñeeño* and *gallunkoodo* individuals. During an interview, Penda Mbow, professor at the West Africa Research Centre (WARC) in Dakar, told me “After independence, if a teacher sent a pupil to wipe the blackboard, he would send his slave to do it.” Further examples are reported in the recent film *Endam Bilaali* (2014) created by Senegalese historians Ibrahima Thioub and Abderahmane N’Gaïde at University Cheikh Anta Diop. They interviewed *gallunkoodo* school teachers who taught in the 1970s. One recalls how he was chastised by the school director for beating a *toorodo* pupil. Another remembers that *toorobe* pupils claimed all the new textbooks when they arrived. When he proposed to reward the best five pupils the director made him increase the list to ten to ensure that several freeborn would be included in order to avoid community tensions.

After probing school personnel in Medina Diallobé further, I discovered that, unsurprisingly, such attitudes do carry over into the school space despite the official discourse of equality. “Children know who they are. The adults teach it at home. A *baylo* can’t sit on your bed [because it is considered polluting]. A *maccudo* kills the animals at the parties,” reckoned Diallo, one of the primary school directors. “In class they wouldn’t dare mention it because the teacher would forbid it, but once outside they know. They all play together, no problems. Maybe if they fight, it comes out.” In addition, there is evidence that despite official school policy to stamp out pupil practice which recreates social category hierarchies, local teachers might not be willing to follow this in all cases. Thioye, the Wolof *collège* director who was able to give an outsider’s view on dynamics in Medina Diallobé, gave an explicit example:

The first time I saw this caste issue in school was when a group of girls refused to sweep, three refused. I forced them, it almost caused a fight. I stayed while they did it, as they were afraid of me. But later I asked what the problem was, other pupils told me, they said ‘She can’t sweep but so and so can’, and I was told that the girls had said ‘It’s not normal that we should sweep when there are *maccube* here.’ Had they said that directly to me, there would have been sanctions! These situations exist but the politicians don’t do anything. But these situations aren’t common, the school is for everyone. Whenever there is a problem with sweeping groups, it’s because of that. All teachers are told to create sweeping groups to clean the classrooms, if there are absentees it’s taken note of. It’s fewer now, but there are still those who find excuses not to sweep. Even at the level of *surveillants* and so on, who are from here, they don’t say anything against the sweeping groups, it’s very sensitive. The *surveillant* should discipline them, but they never do, they organise the groups, but don’t discipline those out of line, because they too are part of a caste, although not necessarily inferior.

These examples paint a picture of the school as a site in which social category inequalities are reproduced by teachers and pupils despite official discourse that it is irrelevant. However, additional examples from the secondary schools in Medina Diallobé show that alongside these processes, *waylube* and *gallunkoobe* in particular celebrate their academic success within the school space as a way to positively reaffirm their social category identity. As noted in the previous chapters, many *toorodo* families in Medina Diallobé value the prestige of *daara* education for their sons and the professions of trade and migration. They can afford to follow these trajectories given the inherited economic privilege of their social category. By contrast, the *waylube* and *gallunkoobe* have been excluded from the *daara*, and historically lack the capital to trade or migrate. Indeed, Mbayla is located on the periphery of the village on the edge of the *jeeri*, far from the fertile *waalo* land. The *waylube* definitions of educated persons for men used to centre on apprenticeship into the art of jewellery-making, as smithing is forbidden to women given the dangerous contact with *jinn*. However, with the decline in customary artisanal crafts, the *waylube* and *gallunkoobe* of Mbayla have recently developed higher evaluations of school and formal sector jobs within Senegal. Several of my informants described how parents there in the last twenty years have placed

greater value on secondary schooling for their children. Ismaila Gueye, 28-year-old *baylo* teacher in the *lycée*, recounted a generational shift whereby men in their forties and fifties almost never attended school, but that now all Mbayla parents send all of their children:

In my generation, there were about fifteen of us age-mates from this neighbourhood, and of those, only six or seven went to school. The others worked. My father and grandfather are jewellers, so they all did that. In our neighbourhood [Mbayla] those who sent their children to school did so because my father persuaded them. He didn't go himself, maybe that inspired him. During the droughts in the 1970s he left to go to Dakar, he was a technician and worked all over Senegal. He has had a lot of luck, so he has influence in the village. Now, everyone goes to school in my neighbourhood. I can't think of anyone who doesn't, and I would say my parents played a role.

The *waylube* have not abandoned jewellery-making. Middle-aged men still practice this profession, and several male *collège* pupils learn in the neighbourhood's workshops during the school holidays. Nonetheless, Ismaila suggests that obtaining formal sector professions has become increasingly important after his father's success in this domain. This was corroborated during an interview I conducted with Hussein Sogo, president of the Medina Diallobé *Amicale*³⁰, an informal association which groups together the village's university students and *lycée* pupils. Also *baylo*, he described the organisation's membership and how over the last decade since its creation, *waylube* and *gallunkoo*be – although largely male - have predominated among those investing in higher education:

The *Amicale* was founded in 2004 but there weren't many of us university students at that point, around ten, and only one girl, Fati Mbow from Mbayla.

They were mainly from Mbayla, and if you look at the previous presidents, you

³⁰ See also Coulon's (1975, pp.72–73) description of such an association in the village of Aere Lao in 1970. Its 60 members consisted of the 'young intellectuals' of the village, namely university, *lycée* and *collège* students. It was represented by an elected committee, in which customary hierarchies seemed irrelevant as the president was a *gallunkoodo*. The association undertook activities in the village over the summer holidays including seminars and theatre sketches, broaching controversial subjects like taboos on inter-caste marriage. Coulon argues that these activities had little impact on changing values in the wider society as notables and adults in general were invited but did not attend, seeing the young people's actions as just 'games'.

can see how it is dominated by Mbayla people. The first president was Karim Sogo, my older brother. His treasurer and secretary general were also from Mbayla. The second president was called Souleye Dia, he was from the lowest social category...the *maccube*, as they're called. The third president was Youssouf Ka, *toorodo*. The girl, Fati Mbow, a *baylo*, was 4th president. The 5th was Tidiane Dia, from the same family as Souleye, so again *maccudo*. 6th was Hamidou Guissé, *maccudo*. I'm the 7th president, again Mbayla, and same family as first president. You see, there have always been more *waylube* and *maccube* than *toorobe*.

Indeed, I encountered several statements suggesting that many of the current generation of young *waylube* now attending school strive for academic success claiming it as a form of prestige. "There is one *baylo* teacher who teaches in the terminal year of *lycée*," explained director Thioye, referring to Ismaila Gueye. "It's a great source of pride for the *baylo* people." He added that the *waylube* pupils publicise their collective success:

Two years ago, after the BFEM exams, they showed off their results saying, 'We've got 100% success.' They count their candidates compared to other categories. I asked one *baylo* teacher, Hawa Thiam about it, and she said 'Yes, we've had good results this year.'

Several informants stressed that the recent valorisation of school diplomas among parents, and their pursuit by pupils, in Mbayla is linked to achieving status to counter their inferior social position. "Those who felt inferior enrolled their children to have social success" stated *collège surveillant* Khadim Diop. When I asked director Thioye about common arguments people gave me that the categories were all equal and no longer relevant, he disagreed saying "It's not true, if you look at Medina Diallobé, the *baylo* people try to succeed through school, they crow about their success, it's a way of affirming themselves. It's felt in education." Ismaila also stressed this dimension of social mobility, saying that:

If you look at all the students in university from Medina Diallobé, there are twenty or so. Out of those, fourteen are from my neighbourhood. In the past, the *toorobe* were superior. Now it's starting to change. Our neighbourhood was the

most diminished in the past, the poorest. Maybe that's why people have really started trying in school.

One *toorodo* informant, Habib Ndaw, had also noticed this trend, and cited it as one reason why *toorodo* parents were now seeking to invest in their children's schooling to counter the possible threat the other social categories posed to their dominance:

The people with most diplomas from the village, the intellectuals, most of them are not *toorodo*, they are *maccudo*, *baylo* and *ceddo*. Because there used to be a huge gap between them and the *toorobe*. They were marginal, the *toorobe* did everything. They were the imam, the chief. Castes weren't consulted, they had no voice. Even at meetings, everyone agreed with the *toorodo*, and people listened to other castes but no one followed it or agreed with it. So they said to themselves, 'Seeing as society is evolving, the only way to go on is to study.' If people want someone with a diploma, they don't specify by caste. So if tomorrow, a government post opens which needs a diploma, they will give it to them [non-*toorobe*]. There are lots of teachers from Medina Diallobé but the *toorobe* don't make up many, the rest are other castes. In the *collège* and *lycée*, there are two teachers from here: Hawa Thiam, *baylo*, and Ismaila Gueye, *baylo*. The *surveillant*, Khadim Diop, is *ceddo*. No *toorobe*! In Medina Diallobé I there is one teacher from the village, a *ceddo*. The *toorobe* realised that if they didn't educate their children, the village would be run by *maccube* and *waylube*! Even the clerics, well some of them, have noticed it. Ceerno Ousmane has a daughter in university. They have seen that they will be behind the castes. Now *toorobe* see they are losing terrain, in the modern world, the village chieftaincy doesn't count any more.

However, this situation of *baylo* commitment to school needs to be nuanced further. Ismaila added that "In my generation, the best pupils came from our neighbourhood. But now...I don't know. Last year we saw that the level has gone down. People see that even those with a Masters' don't have work." He continued:

It's rare to see someone [from Mbayla] in *4ème* or *3ème collège* who drops out. Because it's fashionable. Some only study because they want to stay in school,

to be with their friends. In the school, it's a bit cool, you know, you get to know people, people know you. Even my nephew goes [to school], although he doesn't like it.

This statement suggests that universal *collège* attendance among the current generation of young people from Mbayla cannot be wholly attributed to their parents' high evaluations of schooling, or young people's pursuit of diplomas and formal sector employment, despite several following this path. Rather, it has become normalised among some young people, and its intrinsic value is perceived to coincide with material benefits of social status and the intrinsic pleasure of socialising. Attending school to socialise is not restricted to pupils from the Mbayla neighbourhood. 16-year-old *toorodo* Houley frequently used the justification of "revising lessons" to spend long afternoons and evenings at her cousins' and friends' houses avoiding doing her domestic work, although I observed that she actually revised little in the run up to exams. Her older cousin once remarked that "Houley only goes to school to dress up pretty and gossip with her friends!" Indeed, the appeal of school among young people for socialising has been documented elsewhere, for instance in southern African contexts (Ansell 2004). However, certain pupils from Mbayla were especially noticeable for appropriating the school space to increase their social popularity, developing an anti-school orientation not dissimilar to that of *toorodo* boys described in the previous chapter, yet within the school space.

This process became evident during the *Foyer Socio-Culturel* or Fosco, an annual occasion integrated into the secondary school calendar around April or May. According to Thioye, the *collège* director, Fosco can last up to three days (Friday through Sunday) comprising of social and pedagogical activities such as theatre or a conference with teachers about a school-related theme, and performances by language clubs. Parents, the mayor, other local officials, and pupil representatives and teachers from neighbouring village schools are invited. The director can allocate funds for catering and a prize-giving ceremony, or pupils will distribute envelopes to local shop owners and businessmen for donations. Thioye told me that officially the aim is to build relationships between pupils and teachers, give pupils the opportunity to gain experience in organisation, and to promote schooling in the village. In his opinion, the Fosco was well-organised in 2011 according to these criteria by two studious *toorodo*

girls. However, in 2012 Thioye was opposed to hosting Fosco given how disrupted the school year had been. He was especially opposed to the group of Mbayla boys who had proposed to organise the event who he felt used the space officially intended for pedagogical purposes to further their own social agenda:

The boys who want to do it this year are bandits. Two years ago they organised it and they said they were inviting people and needed money for this and that, I gave 70,000CFA [£78]. Then on the day there were no guests, just a big party. Last year the girls organising it raised 80,000CFA [£90] off their own back. But this year it's the same boys who did it two years ago and I told them to get lost, I said 'You're not serious.' All they want is a party, there is nothing pedagogical.

Facing pupil pressure, the director eventually agreed to allow Fosco to take place on a Saturday in July which would not disrupt classes. In many ways, the event resembled a neighbourhood youth party or *soirée*. Throughout the warmer months, groups of adolescent friends from the same age-set or *fedde* hosted parties in open public spaces in their neighbourhoods. Taking place at weekends, the parties began at sundown and could last until the early hours of the morning, and were therefore called '[the neighbourhood] *ne dors pas* (doesn't sleep)'. Accompanied by a sound system and microphones, *soirées* typically included performances like comedy sketches, male rappers, choreographed dances and beauty pageants by girls. Young people from all over the village attended, sometimes even *sandas*, despite a prevalent moralising discourse among adults and *toorobe* in particular, that the activities were not strictly Islamic. These parties enabled socialising between neighbourhoods and social categories, while maintaining an element of friendly competition surrounding whose neighbourhood puts on the best event. The Fosco was reminiscent of the 'Mbayla *ne dors pas*' party organised a month previously, in terms of content and the prominent role 'popular' youth from Mbayla played in its organisation and performances. When school was occasionally mentioned during the Fosco, it was in negative terms. The main organiser made a speech inspired by the recent pupil strikes, demanding classrooms, and arguing that the director and other politicians deal with the problems more effectively. However, aside from pupils only the director and one teacher were present to hear the remarks. When director awarded prizes for an interclass football tournament, several boys booed when he made an appearance. This was followed by pupils taking

the microphone to perform derogatory impersonations of teachers. Director Thioye's response afterwards reflects how he felt the Mbayla pupils had used the event and school space to promote their social status:

It was organised by mediocres, I really argued with them this year. In the official brief you're meant to choose the best pupils to organise it, but they were voted in because they're most popular and side-lined the better pupils.

These accounts reveal that although the school's statutes may officially reinforce a discourse in which difference between social categories is irrelevant or even non-existent, in reality constructions of social category identity continue to permeate pupils' experiences of the school, their educational trajectories, and evaluations of school value. Legacies of discrimination, and lacking the capital to migrate or succeed financially through trade, are key to understanding the investment parents and pupils from *baylo* and *gallunkoodo* families have made in school diplomas and formal sector work in recent decades. Many of the current generation of young people from Mbayla still celebrate academic success, and school-based definitions of educated persons, to reinforce a positive social identity associated with their category. However, others attend school less for perceptions of its economic utility or even status associated with academic success, but because it has become fashionable and provides them space to socialise and perform an anti-school identity which confers status among their peers. The growing desire among *toorodo* parents to enrol their children in school rather than the *daara* also suggests that, rather than social category identity becoming less salient, it remains an important factor in parents' decisions. For those who perceive that school skills and diplomas are becoming the most important resource needed to earn money and acquire status, the value of school is couched for some *toorobe* in terms of maintaining their superiority, and preventing other social categories from overtaking them socially, economically and politically.

6.3 'Noble work': Status constraints on occupations for *toorodo* women

Next to young people from *baylo* and *gallunkoodo* families, it is *toorodo* girls who are most likely to be encouraged by their parents to obtain BFEM and baccalaureate

diplomas. This may come as a surprise given how, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, it is often *toorodo* parents who place importance on marrying their daughters during adolescence while still at school. However, many middle-class *toorodo* parents encourage their daughters to attend university and also find prestigious formal sector work. The fathers of some of these families have attended state schools themselves, such as members of the village chieftaincy, and Omar Sy, the 45-year-old *dabotoodo* who works as a school director. Yet, fathers keen to push their daughters through schooling also include those who have not attended school themselves. They come from lineages whose men typically attended *daaras*. Indeed, the most striking example people mentioned most often was of Rugiyatou Sy, daughter of Ceerno Ousmane, who was doing a Masters' degree in Dakar. Taken together, these men could be considered middle-class; either of the political elite, or with income from civil service employment, commerce, or clerical activities. Parents' investment in their daughters' education to such an advanced level is celebrated by development actors who see it as encouraging girls to have greater economic independence and decision-making authority in their families. However, this section counters those assumptions in several ways.

Some *toorodo* parents who encourage their daughters to study do so to give them greater opportunities for self-realisation. They support their daughters but do not force them into any particular trajectory. For instance, 45-year-old *toorodo* Omar Sy said of his 18-year-old daughter Mama:

I want to send her to Europe as she is well-behaved, and likes studying and studies hard, *mashallah*. I feel confident that she can study abroad as I've done the work here to prepare her, she is mature and prepared. The *lycée* director is helping her and some others with the university enrolment documents. I gave her suggestions on what to study, but it's her decision. I said medicine, maybe gynaecology, but she said it takes too long, i.e. eight years. So I suggested aviation, being a pilot, but she said it was a man's job. So she said she wants to do finance, which is fine by me.

On the other hand, some parents are more directive as education presents an important source of status for them. One example is 18-year-old Hady Ba, half-sister of Malik Ba the *sharia* student mentioned in Chapter Four. In June 2012, in the run-up to the

baccalaureate, Hady told me how her father Younouss Ba was pushing her to succeed. Her account mirrored what her brother reported about being under pressure from his father to complete his studies for the status they confer:

My father bought a cow already, saying we'll eat it if I get the bac. The pressure is awful, you have to do everything to satisfy him. I want to study telecommunications, at a private university in Dakar for a couple of years, but it's expensive, and then hopefully get a scholarship to go abroad. But my father is forcing me to do medicine! I can't stand it, if I had to give someone an injection I'd mess up and probably kill them!

From the perspective of development actors this recent trend in Medina Diallobé, of middle-class *toorodo* parents supporting their daughters to pursue degrees and formal sector jobs, would appear to demonstrate changes in *toorodo* constructions of gender, freeing young women from constructions focused on marriage by permitting their employment. However, this situation needs to be nuanced further, in two respects. First, girls' education can potentially benefit parents indirectly by increasing their daughters' marriage prospects to men with high-status jobs – who are typically based outside the village, whether in Dakar or abroad. Thus, the pattern considered in the previous chapter of *toorodo* families placing pressure on young women to marry a cousin or prestigious suitor can apply equally to highly-educated young women. A stark example occurred within the Ndongo family, related to the Ndaw lineage of village chiefs. 25-year-old Amina recounted to me how her aunt, Souadou Ndongo, had married an affluent businessman in Dakar and had had three daughters before her husband divorced her. The eldest, Binetou aged 24, had been studying in Switzerland, where she met another Haalpulaar student whom she wished to marry. However, an older cousin, working as a lawyer in the USA, had already approached Souadou Ndongo to request Binetou's hand. Although Binetou did not want to, her mother forced her to marry her cousin. As Amina explained:

Binetou's mother forced her to marry her cousin although she loved another man who also had good prospects. She never liked him, even in her wedding photos you can see she is crying. She had to live with him and keep studying but didn't like him.

In Dakar, I came across several other stories of young Haalpulaar people, male and female, with high levels of education including university degrees who were nonetheless forced by their families into marriages against their will. Indeed, many felt obliged as they were indebted to their family for their education. Hence, the affluent *toorodo* parents in Medina Diallobé who support their daughters to obtain high-status baccalaureate and university degrees can still push them into marriages for the family's status. Despite their education, young people are often powerless to refuse such matches because of the social repercussions. Similar patterns have been observed elsewhere, for instance in parts of India, where parents send their daughters to school to prepare them for roles as wives and mothers and instil restrictive notions of femininity (Agarwal et al. 2006; Jeffery & Basu 1996; Jeffery & Jeffery 1998).

In addition to potentially being pushed into an unwanted marriage, the assumption that highly educated *toorodo* women stand a better chance of earning money and thus increasingly their autonomy is flawed in a second way. Regardless of their educational level, most *toorobe* in Medina Diallobé continue to subscribe to discourses which impose restrictions on the nature of work *toorodo* women can do based on constructions of the category's social superiority. Yagouba Sy, 22-year-old *toorodo* in *lycée*, expressed these notions during a discussion about *toorodo* women's work:

Me: Would you want your wife to work?

Yagouba: Definitely, as long as it's noble work.

Me: What work counts as noble, or not noble?

Yagouba: Like working in an office, that's noble, but not washing clothes or working in the fields, or working in a restaurant.

Me: Why isn't it noble, because it's hard work?

Yagouba: Hard, but also dirty.

Yagouba's statement about what 'noble' work he thinks would be appropriate for his wife hints at the fact that many *toorodo* inhabitants consider it shameful that *toorodo* women perform occupations associated with other social categories. Trade, teaching, and as Yagouba says 'working in an office', are considered appropriately high status. However, manual labour outside the domestic sphere is considered shameful as it is

linked with *gallunkoodo* women, as are any jobs resembling *ñeeño* women's customary professions. Such constraints on *toorodo* women's income-generating activities were evident in the case of cousins Tacko and Diara Sy, two 35-year-old women, who both traded in fabric but wanted to increase their profits by opening a restaurant in the village. Tacko and Diara tried to employ a maid but found no one appropriate and willing, so were left doing the manual work required. After only two months they closed down the business. Declining profits and heavy workloads were factors, but also significant was the stigma surrounding the endeavour given their social category. Tacko, who did not mind challenging these customary barriers, explained that her family's reaction to the gossip forced her to stop:

Diara's mother came to my house and said we should abandon the restaurant, that we are *sharif* and this kind of work isn't for us. I suggested a smaller shop, like just selling drinks and cakes, even that she refused. My mother never refused, she just said 'Make sure you get *talki*' [s. *talkuru*, a charm against the evil eye and tongue]. Ten people now have come to say similar things. One day at the restaurant a client came, he said 'I only know you to greet you, but I have to tell you that all the old men at the main square are talking about you, saying you are the daughters of a cleric and *sharif*, what you're doing isn't good. You should close up.' I said to him, 'I'm not doing anything that's against the religion, let God be the judge of that. I just want to earn money for my children, put them in good conditions, where's the harm in that?' People complicate things.

Similar restrictions barring *toorodo* women from certain occupations also affect *toorodo* girls with diplomas. Attitudes towards the profession of hair braiding are an illustrative example. Hair braiding is an important element of feminine beauty for the Haalpulaar, and women invest significant time on their hairstyles especially in the lead-up to lifecycle events and religious festivals. A woman cannot braid herself and must ask someone else to devote as many as five or six hours, sometimes spread over several days, to plait her hair into complex patterns of thin, cornrow braids. Often women asked their own kin, but if no one was available they might pay someone who specialises in this profession. Hairdressing salons, dedicated to more contemporary hairstyles using artificial hair extensions, are also popular. They are common in urban areas, and one

exists in Medina Diallobé where girls pay an expensive fee for exceptional celebrations such as weddings and baptisms.

According to customary constructions of social category, the profession of braiding is associated with *ñeeño* women, and there is significant social stigma against *toorodo* women doing it. The shame is reinforced by notions of supernatural danger, and the first time I encountered this taboo was with Diara, mentioned above. She told me that she could in theory braid other women, potentially earning 10,000-15,000CFA (£11-17) a day – the monthly salary of a cook in Medina Diallobé - but her husband would not allow it. I enquired why, and she replied “If you do it to the public, you can end up braiding anyone, if you know what I mean.” I did not know what she meant, so she explained “It’s not possible for our caste to braid lower castes. One woman did, and was turned into a goat!” Others later clarified to me that there is a risk when braiding for money that a *jinn* will visit you, and curse or attack you with witchcraft. *Ñeeñbe*, associated as they are with *jinn*, are protected from such risks.

These customary norms prohibiting *toorodo* women from braiding restrict even school graduates from working in this potentially lucrative profession. This was evident in the case of Coumba Sakho, a 26-year-old *toorodo* woman who had obtained the BFEM but dropped out of *Ier lycée* four years previously. She had completed an accounting course in Dakar but had not found work ‘in an office’ as she hoped, although she continued trying to have some financial independence before getting married. Her uncle, Racine, was considering starting up several businesses in the village including a hairdressing salon. He hoped that the project would create jobs for his extended family, and had in mind that Coumba could train and then work at the salon, as she was popular among her kin for being gentle when braiding and skilled in creating complex designs. Racine, like his wife Tacko mentioned above, ignored the customary prohibitions and saw no problem in Coumba’s working as a hairdresser. However, when I asked her what she thought of the idea, Coumba’s refusal indicated shame caused by a combination of its being a vocational profession for ‘unschooled’ people, but also associated with *ñeeñbe*:

Braiding, what kind of work is that?! It’s for people who aren’t even educated, and look at all the diplomas I have. And it’s not safe. There was one woman who braided, and they say she was braiding someone and a tiny hair got into her

eye and she turned blind on the spot. You see, that client was from somewhere else, they look like us except that they have feet like hooves [a *jinn*]. It's not safe.

I pushed Coumba further, saying that her cousin Diara had told me that braiding for money was dangerous for people of her social standing. Coumba replied “*Yes*, now you understand, you see here the society is divided up [into categories]...” Despite desperately wanting to work, Coumba refused to work in a hairdressing salon for the dishonour she felt it would bring her, as both a school graduate and woman of *toorodo* category. Sadly, unmarried and still unable to find work, she could only resist the gendered social pressures surrounding her for so long. A year after I left Medina Diallobé she had been forced by her mother to marry.

Other scholars have noted how pursuit of respectability, involving a complex set of practices defined by appropriate behaviour, language and appearance, is a signifier of class which always intersects with gender identities (Rao 2011; Skeggs 1997). Stories from Medina Diallobé demonstrate the further complexity which arises when the hierarchical logic of social category combines with class. As a comparable example, evidence from Hindu contexts shows that people's understandings of their caste identity intersecting with gender can ironically restrict their ability to take advantage of new economic opportunities. Mies (1982) analysed how in India, ideologies framing high caste women as housewives and not workers limited female lacemakers to low-paid work within the home since they could not imagine alternative respectable employment activities. They acknowledged that women of untouchable or lower castes were able to work outside the home and earn more money, but still maintained their discourse of caste superiority, looking down upon the other women with contempt for not being respectable housewives.

Coumba's story stands in stark contrast to that of another young *toorodo* woman in the village, Fatou Ly, 28-year-old daughter of Hammet Ly, one of the few middle-aged *toorodo* men working as a high-ranking civil servant in Dakar. During an interview, Hammet told me that Fatou had obtained the BFEM in Medina Diallobé but had then dropped out of school. He had therefore paid for her to pursue vocational training as a hairdresser in Dakar:

She wants to get her diplomas, and then work in a hairdressing salon, or open a salon. So we discussed, I asked around, and found a very good private school. I have enrolled her and she's doing IT and management there in the afternoons, because if she finishes it's to open her own salon. I said 'If you finish, you can make one of my houses into a salon. I will buy you all the materials, one million CFA [£1200], no problem. I will help you. I have a good salary.' Each month costs 22,500CFA [£25] not including what she buys as materials, and what she does for homework, simulations. It's pretty expensive, but it's no problem for me.

I subtly enquired about Fatou's choice of profession, given the widespread stigma about *toorodo* women braiding for a living. Hammet replied:

You're right. And the remark has already been made, as people here talk a great deal. Even I thought about it, and I said to them, 'This is a profession she is learning, a modern profession.' It's less about braiding - though of course she will know how to do that because when you open a business you need to know what it entails. Fatou still braids, she can do it well, which contributes to the elimination of certain prejudices, to show that these days such things are very subjective. But rather, you see, Fatou will be a hairdresser in the modern sense, because not only will she be a hairdresser who knows how to braid women and make money from it, but she'll be the future boss of her own business! Because her father will open a salon for her. It'll cost two million [£2400] to install all the materials, all the machines, mirrors, in order to braid ten women at the same time! Because she will employ her own hairdressers, three or four, and pay them each month as a function of the profits. That's why she's also studying management, accounting and IT. But she might have to braid from time to time because that's her profession. So I explained it to people like that and they understood. But it takes someone to dare to get these things rolling.

Despite his insistence that social category is becoming irrelevant and that he is beyond such things, it is with the privilege of belonging to an aristocratic *toorodo* lineage and possessing wealth through a civil service job that Hammet is able to discursively

uncouple his daughter's braiding from the associated taint of social category stigma. He does so by rearticulating her type of hairdressing as a distinct 'modern' profession in implicit contrast to 'traditional' local braiding, but also by positioning it within acceptable constructions of *toorobe* as socially and economically superior 'bosses'. Furthermore, his daughter's business will be geographically removed from the immediate social context of Medina Diallobé by being in Dakar, making the social category stigma weaker. Examples of Haalpulaar *ñeeñbe* redefining their characteristics to be compatible with 'modernity' and contemporary professions have been documented elsewhere, especially in urban areas. Mbow (2008, p.78) cites the case of an organisation of *lawbe* woodworkers pushing for reforestation in Senegal, or *awlube* praise-singers working in politics or the media by using the gift of speech associated with their category to rally people, while calling themselves "traditional communicators" rather than *griots*. In all of these examples, social category constructions are not necessarily being eroded, but rather, the professions associated with them are being redefined and revalorised to make them compatible with 'modern' economic and social opportunities.

However, the conclusions to be drawn from the different cases of *toorodo* women hoping to find employment with their diplomas are that they are differentially positioned with respect to finding work which can be considered compatible with the high status of their social category. *Toorodo* women from more affluent families have more chance of finding office jobs considered respectable for their standing. Others who are less well-off struggle, as the power of taboos against their doing work associated with *ñeeñbe* or *gallunkoobe* are immense. These social constructions are, however, not insurmountable and women do resist the social sanctions and try to negotiate a re-evaluation of social category professions. Yet, the examples of Coumba Sakho and Fatou Ly show that it is those with more privilege and wealth who are better positioned to discursively convince local opponents of such changes. It is therefore still the *toorodo* women from more affluent families who find it easier to access opportunities which enable them to make economic returns on their school diplomas. Those more vulnerable *toorodo* women with fewer options like Coumba Sakho continue to be the most constrained by custom and least able to challenge the gender and social category constructions which limit their ability to find work and resist undesired marriages. Indeed, while young women of *ñeeño* and *gallunkoodo* families face financial

constraints on completing school and finding formal sector employment, they can however take opportunities to do ‘manual’ work as attitudes within their families towards such employment are more liberal.

6.4 Finding work after school: Social mobility and the politics of patronage

The two previous sections have demonstrated that pupils usually invest in secondary school diplomas hoping to then attend university or find work in the formal sector. However, achieving these goals is not straightforward, especially given that unpaid internships or further qualifications are required for well-paid positions. This section reveals the negotiations involved in obtaining these opportunities among parents and young people in Medina Diallobé. The official discourse is that the benefits of school are accessible to everyone. Many inhabitants agree with this notion, in particular that all social categories can reap the benefits of diplomas. However, the case studies presented below demonstrate a more nuanced reality as the likelihood of finding work is strongly affected by the degree of one’s clientelistic relations with the local *toorodo* political elite.

The discourse described in section 6.2, that the school exerts a democratising influence through being accessible to all regardless of social category, is linked to a similar argument that formal sector jobs are equally accessible to all graduates with school diplomas. The logic goes that because of schooling, hierarchies based on social category are being replaced by hierarchies based on wealth through formal employment. Indeed, based on evidence from central India, Froerer argues that this is the case in that context (2011). This logic is reflected in the statement by Modou Ka, a *toorodo* civil servant working in Dakar:

Education is democratising because anyone can get educated, no matter what caste, and get a post. Education can help you get out of caste and poverty. This is what lower castes are doing, and succeeding [...]. The *toorobe* are likely to become the poor ones, because they currently learn the Qur’an which has no occupation attached to it, and then have to work to found a family once they’re old enough.

However, in Medina Diallobé the belief that work opportunities are equally accessible to members of all social categories possessing school diplomas is challenged when considering who manages to find formal sector employment afterwards given the additional costs required. For instance, Hammet Ly described in the previous section, described how he was going to ensure that his son succeeded:

He studied banking and insurance for three years, I sent him to a private university in Dakar. In one year he should finish. And I have already prepared for him, there are three big banks in Senegal, my cousin is the Director General of one of them, and my son does an internship there each year. So once he has his degree they will take him on, and the bank will pay for his Masters'. He is very serious. I have money aside so he can build a house, and buy a car, as a banker you need a car. He's always on his laptop – I bought that last year. He has two even.

This model is possible for the top elite of Senegalese society, but is unimaginable for most inhabitants of Medina Diallobé. The first barrier is information. Hammet Ly is one of the few men of his generation born in the 1960s who, with his privileged background, obtained a university degree in the 1980s and high-ranking government positions, and uses his experience to guide his children. More commonly, young people in the village have parents who did not attend school and cannot advise them on future careers. In such a competitive environment, this makes a great difference, as Moussa Dem, 40-year-old *toorodo* migrant living in France, explained:

People from an intellectual family, they might see the point of studies, and know that these studies will lead to this job, because they live in that, they know, they can foresee. But in my family, I did up to terminal, and my father didn't even know which year I was in! He only knew that I went to school each day and came home. He hasn't studied, he doesn't know! He can't give me advice, do this or that in your studies! Take my little sister, Madina, she wanted to do L [languages and literature stream in *lycée*] but I said do S [maths and sciences]. It's hard, but you have more options with it. Otherwise she would have done L which limits you. As Senegal doesn't have many jobs, if you do L you can only

be a teacher, or a lawyer but for that you need further studies, and the faculty of law at UCAD is full. So I help Madina to revise by buying her books and so on. But others don't have that guidance."

The second barrier to well-paid jobs is wealth, as few families have the capital Hammet Ly does to pay for higher education tuition and other privileges like laptop computers. Therefore, many young people who have managed to obtain the baccalaureate are often ambivalent about their options, and pursue *vacataire* teaching positions as a last resort. For instance, I asked Bachir Wane, a *toorodo* aged 26, studying law at university in Dakar, what he hoped to do afterwards:

"I like contract law, I'd like to work for a firm. But it's hard in Senegal, unless you have someone with a lot of money to help you get an internship and so on. I will probably end up teaching, seeing as that's the only sure thing these days, that and healthcare. You do that for a few years to help support yourself, start a household. It's tough here, the labour market isn't good. Often studies don't lead to anything specific."

Despite low-pay *vacataire* teaching being unattractive, young people's accounts suggest nonetheless that it is a route through which they can valorise their status as graduates. This is reflected in a statement by 28-year-old *toorodo* Harouna Sakho:

"I've been teaching in primary for three years. At the start I didn't like it, I'd never even considered teaching. I wanted to do a course in business management but my father didn't have much money then and it was an expensive course. So I went to public university, I did business administration. But I made a bad choice, I did bac L but in the second year there was lots of statistics and maths and I couldn't keep up, so I left and taught. But little by little it's grown on me. If done well, it can be an honourable profession."

The third barrier to obtaining a well-paid formal job relates to one's contacts, as it is through networks that people obtain information about careers, favours such as jobs or internships, and funding for tuition. The importance of calling upon extended networks to ask for assistance within the educational strategies of young people and their parents

cannot be underestimated. The necessity of meeting the three conditions of merit but also money and connections has also been documented in students' struggles to enter higher education elsewhere, for instance, in Nigeria (Willott 2011).

In Medina Diallobé, the elite who young people mainly approach for help includes the mayor of the commune, Ibrahima Sy, and his second-in-command, Al Hassan Dia, who are both high-ranking civil servants. Ibrahima was locally elected, while Al Hassan was appointed by the mayor. From the colonial period, access to state school scholarships (Robinson 2000b, p.102), jobs, and other public privileges (Villalón 1995) has been mediated through clientelist networks of state-employed patrons. This has increased under decentralisation in the 1970s whereby some decision-making responsibilities were devolved to the locally-elected municipal councils or communes (Blundo 2000; Villalón 1995, pp.89–90). It has led to a new elite of political actors beyond the lineages of village chief, although their networks are often based on older clan-based ties (Olivier de Sardan 2011, p.26). Indeed, local politicians in Medina Diallobé frequently distribute resources and favours. These neo-patrimonial practices encompass both 'patronage' where patrons use state resources to provide jobs and services for their political supporters, and 'neopatrimonial clientelism' where politicians and bureaucrats use state resources to economically support their personal network members. While the former is explicitly political in function, the latter is not (Therkildsen 2014, p.123). The clientelistic dynamics in Medina Diallobé prove a fascinating setting for illuminating the complex influence of social category and wealth on young people's social mobility through education.

Young people are more likely to receive help from members of the political elite based on their family's proximity to these powerful actors, either through kinship or being part of their group of political supporters. For instance, Khadidiatou Sy, a 24-year-old *toorodo* university student, had had her degree tuition financed by the mayor, Ibrahima Sy. Not only is she a member of his extended family, but her mother's sister is the wife of Baaba Ndaw, of the village chieftaincy lineage, and one of Ibrahima's closest supporters. In contrast, at one point Cheikhna Sylla, mentioned in the previous chapter, approached Al Hassan Dia asking for help to pay for a training course for his wife Ramatoulaye, but was less successful. She told me:

I asked Al Hassan for help, we are related distantly, but he didn't do anything. Even my husband Cheikhna went to see him and said 'After all you've done for the village, can't you help my wife?' Al Hassan was ashamed. He said 'Call at any time.' I called but it always went to answerphone. I don't want to keep hassling him.

It is of note that although they are *toorobe*, Cheikhna's family lacks political leverage or kinship ties to the aristocratic clerical or political families. They fled Mauritania during the civil war and are comparative newcomers to Medina Diallobé without land or inherited wealth. These are likely reasons why they were less successful in receiving Al Hassan's support.

Such clientelistic relationships mediating access to school-related resources became increasingly explicit in the run-up to the presidential elections in March 2012. During the election campaign, a rivalry emerged between mayor Ibrahima Sy and his second-in-command Al Hassan Dia for leadership of the commune and local branch of the ruling party, the *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais* (PDS). My informants knowledgeable about the internal politics of the commune suspected that Al Hassan hoped to take the mayor's place in the next local elections. Both men were perceived as evenly matched in terms of legitimacy to political authority, being members of aristocratic *toorodo* lineages. Ibrahima is from the clerical family of Ceerno Ousmane Sy through his father, and the family of the imam, through his mother. Al Hassan's mother is also from the imam's family, making him Ibrahima's cousin, and his father is of the chieftaincy lineage in the neighbouring village of Wuro Mawdo. However, Ibrahima Sy had developed a more longstanding local popularity in Medina Diallobé. Despite not being a member of the village chieftaincy lineage, his dissemination of wealth gained through civil service employment and projects supported through donor funds helped him get elected mayor of the commune in 2008, a trend documented elsewhere in Senegal (Sall 2001; Lavigne-Delville 2000; Blundo 2000). By contrast, Al Hassan Dia was somewhat peripheral to the ruling elite in Medina Diallobé at the time of my fieldwork. He had not been raised in Medina Diallobé or ever lived there, had never been involved in any development activities in the village, and was only appointed second-in-command at the commune by Ibrahima in 2008. By 2012, Al Hassan was therefore doing all he could to

become an important patron, in order to establish a name for himself to increase his political popularity in the wake of the next local elections.

While Ibrahima Sy had won the local municipal election in 2008 hands-down, by 2012 numbers of supporters at his rallies were much lower. A growing discourse of dissatisfaction with Ibrahima emerged among village residents, while Al Hassan Dia was praised for his actions. These differences in popularity were directly linked to local norms meaning that people expect political representatives to personally help their constituents in return for votes (Olivier de Sardan 1999, p.258). One discourse I heard very frequently was that Ibrahima had failed to help ‘the village’ and ‘young people’. In reality, as president of the UGOMD village development association, Ibrahima had played a pivotal role in constructing the *collège* and second primary school in the 2000s, as described in Chapter Three. As president of the UGOMD, Ibrahima had undertaken additional infrastructural projects in the village in collaboration with external donors. He also used his salary as mayor to create a bursary to fund the village’s university students’ accommodation. Nonetheless, criticisms circulated that Ibrahima had not used enough of his *own* funds or *personally* helped inhabitants. As Moustafa Sy, my older host-brother stated, “Ibrahima Sy has done nothing for the village, nothing. The money for the [infrastructural projects], none of it was his own money, it was people in Europe and Dakar raising the money.” Chérif Konté, leader of the village youth movement, also remarked of the aforementioned projects that “Ibrahima said there would be jobs there. But if any youth from Medina Diallobé get jobs there it’ll be scooping up rubbish [as they lack the necessary qualifications].” Samba Ka corroborated that Al Hassan was more popular than Ibrahima because he understood that local people expect a degree of personal favouritism from politicians:

Ibrahima Sy tends not to help individuals directly like Al Hassan Dia, but rather collectives, like he has paid for the university students’ accommodation out of his salary as mayor. He doesn’t help many people get jobs because he’s embarrassed of asking his boss [for favours]. And, Ibrahima isn’t liked because although he works hard and gets things done, he doesn’t have time to call people, he doesn’t have an open house where people feel comfortable and that’s what people like, hospitality. Whereas Al Hassan knows this, he calls people once a month and people like him. If Ibrahima Sy gave the heads of important

families here a phone call each month and 2000CFA [£2.30 or ten minutes of phone credit] here and there, it would do more [for his popularity] than [the infrastructural projects]. Al Hassan Dia is muscling in.

Helping young people into work and higher education became a key area in which Al Hassan competed with Ibrahima Sy for popularity, hoping to take the mayor's place in the next local elections. Samba Ka informed me of the dynamics involved in one such request for assistance from Baaba Ndaw, the prominent local political mobiliser and supporter of Ibrahima Sy and the PDS party:

The mayor promised that he would fund the university tuition for Baaba Ndaw's son, but he didn't look after him too well. So, it was Al Hassan Dia who stepped in to provide his son's university fees. Because *il fait la politique*³¹, he is doing politics, he wants to topple Ibrahima, that's his objective. He's playing with his influence to show the incapacity of the town hall personnel.

Most significantly, Al Hassan asked a friend well-positioned in the government to arrange for several young inhabitants of Medina Diallobé to be appointed as *vacataire* teachers in schools in other regions of Senegal. This case study forms part of a wider trend of clientelistic appointment of *vacataires* in Senegal. One scandal broke in 2012 in the Kolda region as the Academic Inspector, the Ministry of Education's representative at regional level, was fired after it was discovered that he had been selling teacher appointments for 500,000CFA each (£560) (Anon 2012; Diallo 2013a; 2013b). Furthermore, in late 2012 the newly-elected president, Macky Sall, froze all *vacataire* appointments to conduct an audit of existing personnel, after a World Bank report revealed that over 5000 such teachers on the Ministry's payroll could not be identified (Dia 2012). Al Hassan publicised his manoeuvre widely, telling me about it explicitly in an interview. "You see, I have found work for a lot of young people, it's making a big noise in the village." He invited several of the teachers back to Medina Diallobé to participate in the election campaign in 2012.

³¹ In Senegal, *faire la politique* or 'doing politics' refers to a struggle between political factions. It includes following a political leader, and evokes the mobilisation which precedes any confrontation between leaders and the strategies adopted to floor one's adversary and to get the maximum of supporters on one's side. *Faire la politique* means sharing the spoils with the winners and systematically excluding the opponents from managing public resources (Blundo 2000, pp.95–96) (my translation from French).

Most people I knew congratulated Al Hassan's actions. "Al Hassan is nice, calling people and doing good things. He arranged for my friend to teach, he's nice, he helps people." said 16-year-old Houley Sy. Samba Ka agreed that it had added to his popularity, "It's helping people get jobs that people really appreciate, so Al Hassan has done well there." However, other inhabitants I spoke with criticised this patronage practice. They voiced concern over whether the candidates were qualified, questioning how they managed to pass the regional exam to be teachers, and suggested clientelistic appointments for political reasons. Indeed, I knew two of the teachers personally and they did not have the baccalaureate. One, a *toorodo* named Salif Ba appointed as an *ustaas*, had not attended state schools at all but *daaras*, and could not speak Arabic although he spoke French learned from friends and kin. However, both of these young men were related to two of Ibrahima Sy's strongest and most vocal supporters, whom Al Hassan would want on his side come the elections. Others in the village were also dubious of the political intentions behind Al Hassan's appointment of *vacataire* teachers from Medina Diallobé. Although he had helped members of all social categories, his strategy ultimately reproduced his political interests. Ismaila Gueye, the 28-year-old *baylo lycée* teacher stated:

Al Hassan has arranged for many to teach, only some have the bac and that was years ago, so the quality won't be good. Al Hassan was talking about this at the public meeting the other day, and lots of people like him for it. From Mbayla there were two teachers, this neighbourhood five... From all neighbourhoods and all social categories, pretty evenly spread, to show he's helping everyone. And then when he needs it, he can call on those neighbourhoods for support. [...] It's all strictly political.

These examples clearly show that despite the prevalent discourse that graduates of all social categories have equal chances of securing formal sector employment, access to resources to realise the economic utility of school diplomas are mediated through clientelist relationships. The advantages particular young people enjoy over others are not defined by the wealth of their immediate family, or by belonging to a lineage with inherited *baraka* as with graduates of the *daaras*. Rather, it is associated with their relationships to important patrons. These patrons are all *toorodo* men of the local

political elite, from customary aristocratic lineages, with significant personal salaries and high-ranking civil service positions which enable them to grant favours and mobilise additional funds. Importantly, although the patrons are male members of the *toorodo* aristocracy, beyond this level the correlation between wealth and social category is not so simple. Other *toorobe* not of aristocratic families are not necessarily better positioned within these clientelist networks than members of other categories.

These examples provide a counter-balance to the case of Barro Cissé considered in the previous chapter, whose clientelistic relations with his *toorodo* host family in the long-term undermined his attempts to succeed in school. By contrast, this section suggests that engaging in relations with the political elite has positive implications for the social mobility of client families. However, in the long-run it supports the findings of Morgan et al. mentioned in the previous chapter, that clientelism as a system benefits the patrons more. The patronage relationships documented here whereby – some dissenters aside – the majority of people vote for the mayoral candidate who dispenses the most material favours, indirectly reproduce the overall hierarchical political structure which underpins the elite positions of members of the *toorodo* aristocracy. Ideological or material barriers to other categories’ access to political positions ultimately inhibit possibilities of genuine structural social reform. In India (Jeffrey et al. 2008, p.125) and Bangladesh (Rao & Hossain 2011, p.627) the requirement to pay bribes to obtain civil service positions has led to lower investment in state school among poorer parents and young people. Time will tell if comparable trends emerge in Medina Diallobé.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed several groups in Medina Diallobé who are conspicuous for pursuing long-term post-primary schooling in the village. Findings show that social category identity is extremely important in shaping people’s trajectories, despite the fact that statistics on this form of difference are not collected, and official discourses deny its relevance in contemporary Senegalese society. In Medina Diallobé this is revealed by *baylo* and *gallunkoodo* families seeking to valorise their status through seeking a school-based educated identity; *toorodo* families sending boys to state schools so as not to be economically and politically ‘overtaken’ by other categories; and *toorobe*

investing in girls' education so they can earn money outside the home as long as it is 'noble work'. This in turn requires discursive 'work', as people appropriate constructions of 'modernity' in contrast to 'tradition' to overcome customary ideological constraints on social category behaviour.

Gender, social category and wealth intersect in complex and unpredictable ways, and generalisations cannot easily be made. For instance, the previous chapter noted that *toorodo* families pressure girls to marry before completing school, and many *toorodo* men in the village prefer wives without diplomas or formal employment, yet this chapter showed that it is *also* among *toorodo* parents – especially the middle-class who can afford the investment – that high value is accorded to their daughters' schooling and even university education. This latter scenario also counters the stereotype mentioned in Chapter One, that schooling, higher education and formal employment are empowering for women, as they increase their authority, autonomy and financial independence. Rather, being educated does not necessarily enhance *toorodo* girls' ability to resist marriage to a suitor their family considers appropriate, or negotiate around the stigma concerning vocational professions. As with the previous chapter, these findings stress the need for research on inequalities in education outcomes in West Africa to consider the crucial combined role social category and gender identities play on decision-making processes. Their intersection with people's socioeconomic status, and hence ability to realise their desired trajectories, also needs to go beyond narrow measures of household income to take into account how people are embedded within clientelistic relationships, and how this influences their access to assets.

Indeed, section 6.4 problematized the promises made by the state and development agencies that school diplomas provide meritocratic and equal employment opportunities to all graduates. While the *daara* is increasingly recognised by Medina Diallobé inhabitants as reproducing *toorodo* dominance as only the aristocratic lineages can truly benefit economically, in reality the state school space also risks being appropriated by certain elite *toorobe* to reinforce their superior social position. By channelling funds for university tuition, and even *vacataire* jobs, to their kin and political allies, members of the *toorodo* elite exclude from these opportunities anyone who might seek to challenge their political monopoly in the village. This constitutes a barrier to distributive justice, namely equal access to the benefits of schooling. These examples also contribute to

debates surrounding the influence of clientelist relations on education outcomes and social mobility, concluding that while they help client families in the short term, they support unequal power relations and patrons' privilege in the long run. Time will tell whether these processes will alter parents' and young people's investment in secondary schooling.

Chapter 7. “Doing both”: The challenges of acquiring religious and secular knowledge

7.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters suggest that attendance in either Qur’anic schools or state schools in Medina Diallobé is mutually exclusive. However, in reality seeking knowledge associated with both types of school is an integral part of *all* young people’s learning strategies. Everyone I met during my research, whether Senegalese in the Futa Tooro or in Dakar, or European academics, argued that “Everyone does both”. The model of ‘doing both’ I came across most often in Dakar is the pattern common among the urban middle-class dating from the colonial period, of preschool-aged children attending the *daara* to learn the basic Qur’anic verses, before dropping out within the first few years of starting primary school. While this trajectory is followed by many children in Medina Diallobé, the ‘*daara*-then-school’ model is not universal, and the range of additional strategies inhabitants pursue is far more diverse. This chapter shifts away from considering the *daara* and state schools separately, to discuss the various means parents and young people employ to help the latter acquire a combination of knowledge and skills associated with the different schools.

So far, I have shown how parents’ and young people’s reasons for valuing the *daara* or state school full-time are motivated by the intersecting considerations of faith and other intrinsic benefits, social status relating to gender and social category, and economic utility. Their trajectories clearly reveal the influence of embedded social norms, most importantly the intimate and exclusive association constructed between *toorodo* masculinity and *daara* education. *Toorodo* boys especially of clerical lineages attend the *daara*, while adolescent girls’ and non-*toorodo* boys’ enrolment in state schools is linked to their exclusion from the *daara*. However, full-time attendance in neither the *daara* nor the state school fulfils all the educational demands of inhabitants. The *daara* meets the spiritual needs of *toorobe* boys, and contributes to their prestige and social status, but, with the exception of a minority with specific inherited privileges, it is perceived as failing to provide satisfactory income-generating skills. The state school promises income-generating opportunities through diplomas and provides the important skill of French literacy, although well-paid formal employment afterwards is restricted

to those who can afford additional training, or have links to patrons who can help them. And, despite government reforms to integrate a larger religious component into state schools, the current secondary public schools still do not meet the demands of inhabitants for advanced Islamic instruction, particularly among *toorobe*.

In considering strategies people use to obtain knowledge associated with both *daaras* and state schools, the most obvious alternative is enrolment in private Islamic schools. Section 7.2 of this chapter describes the extent to which reformed Islamic schools, whether private or state-run, are accessible to people in Medina Diallobé. It concludes that they are located far away and while they exert some influence on the local educational landscape, an accessible and affordable secondary school which teaches both religion to advanced level and French with other subjects does not yet exist in the commune. Section 7.3 considers young people's attendance in private, fee-charging Islamic schools as a strategy restricted to more affluent families. Section 7.4 considers solutions to this quandary found by less well-off young people, namely self-directed learning outside of formal institutions. This can be considered a 'tactic' among more disadvantaged pupils, whether girls and non-*toorodo* boys excluded from the *daaras*, or *toorodo* boys who cannot afford private tuition who learn French alongside memorising the Qur'an in a *daara*. Section 7.5 looks at how pupils alternate between several types of school over the duration of their educational career. It reveals that the way in which they do so reveals logics at odds with state, development actors', and Islamic reformers' evaluations of valuable knowledge, but also possible alternative education formats of interest to policy-makers.

7.2 The influence of reformed Islamic schools in Medina Diallobé

Despite the fact that most young people in Medina Diallobé attend state schools, everyone I spoke with insisted that every child needs some Islamic education first. As 18-year-old *toorodo* Aliou Watt in *4ème collège* said "You can have the Qur'an but not French school, but the other way around isn't possible, i.e. to just have French school!" Pupils who attend state school, regardless of social category, consider basic religious knowledge to be crucial, and of more inherent importance than things learned in state school. Seydou Coulibaly, a 26-year-old *gallunkoodo* man who had obtained the

baccalaureate, said “When you learn the Qur’an, you have to learn it for life, it’s not permitted to forget any of it. In French school, you learn something for the exam and you move on.” Astou Ndiaye, a 22-year-old *gallunkoodo* woman who had dropped out of *4ème collège*, made a similar comment: “The *sharia* is so important, it’s more important than what you learn at French school. There’s stuff they don’t teach you in French school that’s in the Qur’an.” I also encountered a strong argument among parents and teachers in Medina Diallobé that basic knowledge of the Qur’an helps children succeed later in state school. Harouna Sakho, a 28-year-old *toorodo* primary school teacher, argued that “Children who learn both are the best pupils, they are good at memorisation but also have a good analytical capacity.” This view has been documented more widely in Senegal, from the 1930s (Ware 2014, p.193) and in other contexts such as Morocco, Yemen and Nigeria (Boyle 2006, p.495).

Another similar discourse I encountered throughout Senegal is that both religious education and state school skills are needed in combination for shaping moral but also economically productive persons. This is captured perfectly in a sketch teachers wrote and pupils performed at Medina Diallobé II school, at an event on the topic of ‘religious education and the crisis of values’, as recounted by Koïta, the director:

There were three families, one was rich, the second was average, the third was poor. Seeing as the theme was ‘religious education and the crisis of values’, in the rich family the Africans want to imitate the life of the whites. So these were rich and had forgotten their culture, they wanted to adapt to French culture. They didn’t even teach their children the religion. All they wanted is that their children succeeded in school. The second family, the child learns the Qur’an and goes to French school. The last family, they adopted their nephew and instead of teaching him the Qur’an or sending him to school, sent him to work in the market. He doesn’t learn anything. And then in the end, what happened? The child who learned both finished his Qur’anic studies, got his diplomas, got his bac, and went to the university to pursue his studies, but he will be polite and respect his religion. So this child learned good habits and Islamic ideals. Now, the rich family, the father finishes by being fired from his job, the family has nothing now. And they start doing God knows what, they are uprooted, they can’t educate the daughter, she doesn’t have good behaviour and she does

whatever she wants. The poor family, the boy gets into trouble, steals something, the police have to intervene and the mother is responsible for his upbringing. It was great, the pupils acted all of that, and they did it very well!

This discourse that both state school skills and religious knowledge are needed to create both moral and economically productive persons is also subscribed to by *toorodo* boys attending the *daara* to advanced level. Many *sandas* agreed that alongside the moral lessons and *baraka* conferred through Qur'anic memorisation in the *daara*, French literacy is also needed for finding work afterwards. The story below, recounted by 28-year-old *toorodo* Lamine Hanne, reveals a common trope among Medina Diallobé inhabitants, of the economic pitfalls of only memorising the Qur'an but not learning French:

You need French, it's good as you can read and write, and get by talking to people. And with a bit of Arabic too you can read the Qur'an. That's why the Franco-Arab school is good, you can do both. But here, it's either one or the other, it's hard to do both. Without French it's seriously bad. My cousin studied the Qur'an at a *daara* in the Futa and finished when he was 30. He went to France and couldn't do anything, he couldn't speak the language at all, he didn't know anything. He said to people 'Give me French lessons' before he went, but by then it was too late. If you study the Qur'an it's possible to get French lessons on Thursdays and Fridays, the days you have off. But if you learn nothing, you have no chance. My cousin bought a driving license and a car but he couldn't even understand signs that said 'danger' or 'stop'. He was arrested and put in prison for two years and had to pay a fine, and they took his car. Now he's in Dakar trying to find work...but if you have a bit of French you can get by, if you go to Cameroon, or Gabon. If you learn a bit of both, it's good.

However, acquiring Islamic education as well as French literacy and state school subjects is far from straightforward in Medina Diallobé. Chapter Two documented in detail the different kinds of Islamic schools which have been developed in Senegal over the past century to address this challenge. These include schools founded by Sufi leaders, clerics, Salafi-inspired reformists, and the state. Private fee-charging schools outside state recognition include boarding-school *daaras* dedicated to intensive

memorisation of the Qur'an within a few years; Arabo-Islamic institutes teaching Arabic alongside the Qur'an; and Franco-Arab schools teaching French and additional subjects alongside religion. The state has also created public Franco-Arab primary schools and some *collèges* in the past fifteen years. All these schools are typically open to girls as well as boys, and have no barriers to access based on social category. None of these models is however present in or near Medina Diallobé. The *daaras* continue to operate, as seen in Chapter Four, largely according to a model of long-term memorisation of the Qur'an under a cleric, paid for through manual labour and unquantified gifts after completion of study, restricted to *toorodo* males. The state schools available, as described in the previous chapters, are those based on the model inherited from the colonial period with limited religious content, not the more recent Franco-Arab schools.

Despite the absence of these schools in Medina Diallobé and the surrounding area, evidence shows that the existence of alternative Islamic school models elsewhere in Senegal is starting to influence educational provision in the commune. The first example is that, since 2009, a 23-year-old Franco-Arab school graduate named Aissata Sall has started teaching girls and women basic religious practice and Qur'anic verses from her home. At age ten Aissata began learning at a boarding *daara* in Dakar, completing memorisation of the Qur'an when she was 15. When she was 16 she started learning Arabic and French at the prestigious private Al-Falah Franco-Arab school, reaching the equivalent of 5^{ème} year in *collège*. At the age of 18, Aissata married and returned to Medina Diallobé to live with her husband and parents-in-law. She told me she stopped studying herself as there was no boarding school in the village. "But the Qur'an says that if you have knowledge you should teach it", Aissata explained, following a pattern common among reformist-educated Muslim women to establish their own schools in their communities (Kalmbach 2012). "Teaching also helps you not to forget what you have learned." Her practice has no precedent in Medina Diallobé, as prior to 2009 girls would usually be taught by male *sandas*. Aissata's initiative is typical of the growing influence of reformist Islamic schools in opening new religious educational opportunities for girls, but still falls far short of a full-time Islamic school which caters to females at either primary or secondary level in the village.

As regards government provision of religious education, the new Franco-Arab schools, whether primary or *collège*, which split teaching equally between the state-school curriculum taught in French, and Islamic subjects taught in Arabic, are located several hundreds of kilometres away in the regions of Kaolack, Diourbel and Louga. They have had no impact on school trajectories of adolescents and young adults in Medina Diallobé. No one I spoke to was aware of their existence, and Franco-Arab schools that inhabitants attended were private fee-charging establishments in Dakar or St Louis. The state has also recently introduced six hours of religious education and Arabic a week into the existing public primary school curriculum, but the *collège* and *lycée* syllabi have not been altered. Pupils are not taught religious studies, although they do learn Arabic as a foreign language and some Islamic history. For many who attend the state secondary schools for the income-generating skills and diplomas conferred, they perceive the schools as insufficient for learning their religion to advanced level. Mohamed Sy, 15-year-old *toorodo* in 4^{ème} *collège*, stated “In school we learn all about Molière and René Caillé but nothing about Cheikh Umar Tall who brought good things to Senegal, he taught us about God. Instead we only learn about people who did bad things to Africa.” Kalidou Ndiaye, 24-year-old *ceddo* in terminal *lycée* agreed: “My history teacher at school knows nothing of Islamic history. It’s bad, I know more, and I go to books and another better teacher to find out more.”

The following sections reveal the strategies young people use to acquire both religious knowledge and skills associated with the state schools, given the lack of options available which combine both in Medina Diallobé. Their multiple and varied pathways reflect similar common preoccupations, but large differences in ability to realise those aspirations. This type of evidence is significant given the lack of research on people’s experiences of engaging across different school types in contemporary African Muslim contexts, and the ways in which this engagement is embedded in common logics, rather than different rationales for different schools.³²

³² See, however, Bledsoe’s (1986) fascinating article on how cultural beliefs about the importance of esoteric “secret” knowledge and power attached to literacy influenced people’s evaluations of both state and Qur’anic schools in Sierra Leone.

7.3 Full-time study in private Islamic schools

Several private Islamic schools in cities, which facilitate acquisition of religious education and skills useful for finding work, appeal to inhabitants of Medina Diallobé. The type of private school most frequented by young people is the boarding *daara* which teaches memorisation of the Qur'an, with board, lodging, and tuition paid for through monthly fees of 25,000CFA–30,000CFA (£28-34 – the cost of a large sack of rice which lasts a household a month). These schools do not teach French or Arabic, but as they teach memorisation of the Qur'an intensively within four to five years they leave graduates more time to learn other knowledge afterwards in other settings.³³ As described in Chapter Four, long-term study alongside work for the cleric in the rural *daara* increasingly conflicts with young men's aspirations to earn a living quickly in the cash economy. For instance, Binta Sy, a 45-year-old *toorodo* woman of a branch of the clerical Sy family, who sends all her sons to boarding *daaras* in Dakar, stated how she prefers these schools for the speed at which students learn the Qur'an: "Seydina [aged 26] went to a private *internat*, he is abroad now. But see, he finished the Qur'an in 2003 and his cousin Abderahmane who is the same age [and studied in a *daara* in the Futa Tooro] finished in 2010." 15-year-old *toorodo* Mohamed Sy also told me why he would be able to study faster at a boarding *daara*:

There [in the boarding *daara*] you can forget everything about your life here because you don't go out at all, only Fridays for prayers, and you only see your family on religious holidays. If I stay here [in the classic *daara* typical of the Futa] I won't learn well. There you only learn, you don't have to work for the cleric. So what you learn in one year there could take you four years here. There aren't many schools like that in the Futa.

Boys from the affluent *toorodo* families in Medina Diallobé, such as the Ndaw village chiefs, Sy clerical families, Ba family of the imam, and others with large land-holdings or wealth from migrants abroad, are most likely to have at least one son who attends, or who has attended, a boarding *daara*. However, despite their desirability, numbers of

³³ In comparison to *daaras* in the Futa Tooro, where the average length of time needed to memorise the Qur'an is ten years, 33% of *talibés* in the Dakar region memorise the Qur'an fully within only 3 years (MEN 2010, p.53).

boys from Medina Diallobé who attend these *daaras* is fairly low as it is an expensive option. Mohamed Sy explained his struggle to find the funds to attend such a school in Dakar, after his father had died: “I even asked my brother Djibril [a migrant living in France], but he said that if he paid for me then he would have to pay for anyone else who asked.” Luckily for Mohamed, his mother had inherited wealth from her family, and had sons abroad who regularly sent her money, so could afford to pay his fees.

The lack of affordable Islamic school options in or near Medina Diallobé is leading to a stratification of access to valued knowledge, perpetuating forms of inequality which have their roots in the colonial period. As mentioned in Chapter Two, in the early twentieth century, only middle-class urban families could afford to take the best of both forms of education, by paying tuition fees for their children to attend the *daara* as day students, while simultaneously sending them to state schools. Poorer families valuing Qur’anic education were obliged to send their sons to be live-in students in the rural *daara*, and were excluded from the privileges the state school conferred in the new political and economic order. In this case, the preference is reversed: *toorodo* families do not want intensive state school education with the *daara* on the side, but the opposite, intensive *daara* education with French on the side. Nonetheless, the colonial period established inequalities between those who could afford to do both, which has not yet changed much for all the state’s reforms. Even today, only privileged families in Medina Diallobé can afford the private Islamic schools which enable students to pursue trajectories where they combine both forms of knowledge within a reasonable timeframe. These families tend to be *toorobe* of customary aristocratic lineages, large land-holdings and inherited wealth, with migrant members abroad, or patronage connections to the political elite mentioned in the previous chapter.

Despite the fact that few *toorodo* boys attend boarding *daaras* in the cities, I encountered examples that suggest that this model, where students learn the Qur’an intensively, is leading to changed perceptions among young men in Medina Diallobé of the value of working for a cleric in a rural *daara*. Diallo, the Medina Diallobe I primary school director, captures the still widespread ideology that not paying tuition fees to the cleric, but working instead as part of a reciprocal relationship, is necessary for accumulating *baraka*:

You need to work for the cleric and suffer a bit to get *baraka*. Before *almudbe* worked in the fields, but the cleric wasn't exploiting them! They wanted to work there. They bring wood so they can study by the fire in the evening. [...] The cleric isn't allowed to ask for money for teaching, but you have to work for him out of your own desire, and you benefit from the *baraka*. He will bless you a lot if he's pleased with you.

However, I witnessed a debate between *sandas* suggesting shifting views about the relative merits of working for the cleric. One *sanda*, Hammadi, in his early twenties, was extremely diligent in practising recitation of the Qur'an all day at home, virtually non-stop, according to a strict personal schedule. His desire was to complete memorisation as quickly as possible in order to start working. The other *sandas* agreed that he was making good progress. But Alfa, another *sanda* of the same age who spent less time reciting as he regularly went to work in his cleric's fields, remarked behind his back "but Hammadi never works for his cleric, and that's not good [for *baraka*]".

Hence, the valorisation of *baraka* derived through working for the cleric is being challenged by the new notion that sufficient *baraka* can be acquired solely through Qur'anic memorisation. Indeed, many inhabitants of Medina Diallobé argued that paying tuition fees at an urban boarding *daara* in order to memorise the Qur'an in five years, is preferable to long-term study in a rural *daara* for twice or three times as long. In the comparable context of the prayer economy in Niger, Butler (2006) has noticed a similar shift from long-term reciprocal relationships with clerics characterised by exchange of unspecified sums of money, to preference among clients for fixed-rate payments through short-term market transactions. Butler argues that clients prefer the latter as it works more to their economic advantage than long-term relationships, as the overall price paid in the one-off transaction works out as being less. In Medina Diallobé, economic incentives are also behind this shift, but a 'time-is-money' logic criticising the long duration spent studying in the rural *daara* seems to be the crucial factor considered, rather than dissatisfaction with the reciprocal cleric-*almudo* relationship *per se*.

It is not only boys from *toorodo* families who attend the boarding *daaras* outside Medina Diallobé. These schools also appeal to a couple of *toorodo* families for their

daughters, and non-*toorodo* families for their sons. As revealed in Chapter Two, the *daaras* in the Futa Tooro associated with the Umariyya Tijaniyya Sufi order have customarily been barred to these groups. Nevertheless, just because they are excluded from long-term formal Islamic instruction does not mean that young women and non-*toorodo* men do not value and desire to acquire more religious knowledge. With respect to women, as described in Chapters Two and Four, girls' exclusion from the *daara* has been justified through ideologies which frame femininity as incompatible with formal Islamic education. However, as documented in Chapter Two, these ideologies have been strongly challenged elsewhere in Senegal, and Islamic schools run by Salafi-inspired reformists, Sufi orders and clerics in urban contexts are much more open to women as both teachers and pupils. Today, only two *toorodo* families in Medina Diallobé that I knew of had a strong tradition of sending their daughters to boarding *daaras* to learn the Qur'an. These include the parents of Qur'anic teacher Aissata Sall, mentioned above. These families are atypical, however, in being middle-class, and whose family members, mainly based in Dakar, are '*ibado*'³⁴ or overtly anti-Sufi reformists. In these families, girls themselves prefer to attend the Islamic schools. In Aissata's case, she told me "I was ten and I had two best friends, and they both left to go to *internats* and I really, really wanted to, as I preferred to learn the Qur'an. I cried until they sent me." 18-year-old Fatimata in terminal *lycée*, who is Aissata's cousin, also told me how she would prefer to attend an Islamic school but her father could not afford it: "Here girls do less Qur'anic schooling than boys, but I would like to learn Arabic, English and French, nothing should be left out. But I don't have much choice, and not enough time. My cousin is studying in Kuwait, she did the full Qur'anic stream in Dakar."

Although these families are a minority, discourses developed elsewhere in Senegal about the benefits of formal Islamic education for women are permeating into Medina Diallobé. Several men mentioned that they considered local women's current state of religious knowledge and education to be insufficient. "There are parts of the Qur'an and Islam which a man can't say openly to a woman," explained Ceerno Mukhtar Sall, the local *sharia* expert. "It would be better if a woman teaches a woman certain parts of the

³⁴ The term *ibado* is derived from the name reformist association *Jama'at 'Ibad ar-Rahman*. It is used to refer to Muslims in Senegal who follow Salafi-inspired interpretations of Islam, who usually oppose Sufi practice including superogatory prayers and the consultation of *shaykhs*. While in Medina Diallobé the term carries negative connotations, in Dakar it has been appropriated by those to whom it refers (Cantone 2012, p.14).

Qur'an and especially parts of the *sharia*, i.e. when talking about menstruation and marriage, a man is poorly placed to teach that to a woman." Opinions such as these demonstrate a logic that women's exclusion from Islamic education impacts negatively on their individual religious practice and spiritual development. However, another prevalent argument I heard from men is that women's 'ignorance' of religion contributes to negative social consequences, and women's failure to fulfil their domestic feminine roles. Through conversations with *sandas*, I learned that this is a popular current theme in the sermons delivered by clerics in the Futa Tooro. This argument is evident in a discussion between myself, *lycée* pupil Yagouba Sy, and his *sanda* friends Hammadi and Moustafa, all in their early twenties:

Yagouba: Few women learn the religion in the Futa Tooro. They do the cooking and the washing and so on. They could learn alongside, but they're not taught. Not even the girls in the clerics' houses learn that much. There are women of 80 years old who don't know how to pray, they don't know *surat al-fatiha*, they've just always copied what they saw other people doing. A *marabout* from P---village said so.

Hammadi: If you want a wife who has learned the religion, you should go to St Louis, there are lots who have learned the Qur'an there, at boarding schools.

Yagouba: Or Dakar. But here in the Futa! *Ina heewi gandal kono ina manki*, there is lots of knowledge but something's missing. It can also bring problems in a household, if she hasn't learned you will forever be saying, 'Do this, do that, that's not good,' etc. If a woman isn't educated it'll cause you problems. The children will be badly educated and do God knows what. Islam doesn't like that – everyone should learn.

Moustafa: A *marabout* from B--- village said this too. Here the girls prefer to learn French. They go to Dakar for the holidays and then come back wearing jeans.

These young men's arguments clearly associate the lack of women's religious education with poor child-rearing practices, and social problems for men as husbands. Interestingly, this growing demand among men for women to start learning more within Islam is underpinned by the same logic that supported their exclusion of women from *daaras* in the first place; for them to successfully fulfil their roles as pious, obedient

wives and mothers. The shift in local men's discourses reflects preoccupations about the encroachment of Western culture, which is linked to relatively recent experience of girls attending secondary state schools and enjoying the privilege of holidaying in Dakar.

In contrast to these men's emphasis on women learning the religion formally to prevent social breakdown, Aissata Sall's justification is different, as she argues that women have an inherent right to Islamic knowledge which is currently being denied them. Aissata's explanation for why girls in Medina Diallobé do not usually learn the Qur'an to advanced level stresses ideological barriers in contrast to the typical arguments I encountered, described in Chapter Four, which focus on practical constraints. This is neatly reflected in a discussion between myself, Aissata, and Chérif Konté, my well-meaning but inexperienced interpreter who had a tendency to answer my questions himself:

Me: It's rare here that girls learn the Qur'an to the end – why?

Chérif: The problem is that you have to send your daughter somewhere and it's not safe to send her to the house of a cleric in another village. In her own village she has to cook, and there are other distractions like friends.

Me: Could you ask Aissata please.

Aissata: It's because people here in the Futa only teach the girls how to pray, but God says that both men and women are equal in terms of education. Often women have regrets that they didn't learn more when they were younger. *Ina yurminii*, it's a shame.

Indeed, women who sent their daughters to Aissata's, or studied there themselves, tended to cite the intrinsic value of learning the Qur'an as their justification, rather than increasing their, or their daughters', marriageability. One woman, 30-year-old *toorodo* Maimouna, explained that she sent her 8-year-old daughter Zara to learn the Qur'an and invocations as it was "a useful education" which the *daaras* neglected. Maimouna's own father, a cleric since deceased, had taught her, which is why she wanted her daughter to have the same opportunity. This difference, with men justifying women's Islamic education for upholding the patriarchal order, while women argue for its intrinsic and empowering value, has also been documented in Pakistan (Bradley & Saigol 2012, pp.679–683).

As well as urban boarding *daaras*, some Medina Diallobé parents and young people also seek out Islamic schools teaching knowledge additional to memorisation of the Qur'an. These schools are, however, less popular than the boarding *daaras*, not least because monthly fees are often higher, at 40,000CFA (£45, the monthly salary of a night watchman in Dakar). I only knew of a handful of young people attending such schools: Ceerno Ousmane sends his adolescent sons to Al-Falah Franco-Arab school; two other affluent *toorodo* families with a more anti-Sufi reformist orientation, including that of Aissata Sall mentioned above, send both their sons and daughters to Al-Falah. 24-year-old *ceddo* in terminal year of *lycée*, Kalidou Ndiaye, also attended an Arabo-Islamic institute of Salafi-reformist orientation in St Louis, before returning to Medina Diallobé to attend secondary state school at the age of 15.

It is important to note that Franco-Arab or Arabo-Islamic schools that teach within a Salafi ideology appeal to parents of both Sufi and Salafi-reformist orientations. The young people who attend have similar religious perspectives to their parents, and interestingly stress different incentives and benefits from attending these schools, which is linked to their social status. For instance, Kalidou Ndiaye, from a low middle-class *ceddo* family (his father was a technician and then sold religious books after he was made unemployed), values the Salafi-inspired Islamic school for the intrinsic benefit of learning the religion. Typical of Salafi-inspired reformists, Kalidou considers that understanding the literal meaning of the Qur'an is of greater value than memorising the Qur'an without its meaning. Therefore, learning Arabic literacy and Qur'anic exegesis are, as far as he is concerned, the main value of the Arabo-Islamic school. Like many Salafis, Kalidou frames the importance of his education as being that his knowledge is more legitimate than that of Sufi clerics:

I was at an Islamic boarding school in St Louis. Our house there is just opposite the mosque, on the same road. And my *jamma* [study group] is there, they are Sunnis³⁵, they learn the *tafsir*, so they talk of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the

³⁵ The self-designation of 'Sunni' or 'Sunnite' is common among Senegalese who follow an interpretation of Islam influenced by Salafism, as Augis (2013, p.76) explains: "Adherents today refer to themselves as "Sunnites" to indicate that they work to correctly practice the Sunnah, or traditions of the Prophet Muhammed. Despite many blurred philosophical and political boundaries between orthodox and Sufi groups in Senegalese as well as West African history, this self-reference serves as a semantic distinction

Prophet. I studied there for a while and plus I go back there every summer holidays. There is a good library there too, I have learned a lot. I can't say I enjoy living in the city, but it's true that you can find things there that you can't find here. People here are ignorant, and follow *marabouts* rather than the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. I see clerics here and I'm ashamed of their behaviour. Yet people go to see these charlatans, with their divinations and so on.

It is clear from Kalidou's account that the anti-Sufi ideology also appeals to him as it challenges the model typical of the Umariyya Tijaniyya Sufi order in the Futa Tooro which has excluded non-*toorobe* like himself from religious knowledge:

In the past they were warriors, the *ceddo* caste, religion didn't even concern them. Rather, it was their magic, they would get together and sing and talk of their horse and their rifle. But it was my father's faith which led me to learn the Qur'an. [...] The fact that our caste couldn't learn the religion was a myth, a myth propagated by fear and laziness, but we have broken through it. It's not about being black or white which makes you superior, or your caste, or who your father is. [...] Before some castes were held to be superior, and even I used to call people *maccube* and so on, but I have since learned in the Qur'an that this is bad.

Indeed, while Kalidou stresses the intrinsic value of the reformist Islamic school as being learning for its own sake, he cites another benefit of this education. His erudition in Arabic, and ability to quote directly from the Qur'an, has improved his social status by increasing his authority to challenge *toorodo* clerics' discrimination on the basis of social category:

In the little mosque at first I felt awkward, as if I'm not meant to be there as a *ceddo*, it was all *toorobe* there. They have a kind of monopoly over the religion and I daren't say anything. Then there was one day when we were all in line to pray, and I was in the front row on the right hand side. And someone from the imam's family came in late and someone tried to push me aside to make room,

for Sunni activists, implying that their religious practices are more pure than those of brotherhood adherents and the vast majority of Senegalese, who are nonetheless also Sunni Muslims."

but I refused. After we had prayed I said you don't have the right to push me aside, we are all here to worship God, and they said 'Yes that's true... but the wise ones have the right to a place at the front', or whatever. They agreed though that what I said was correct in the religion. People here have a tendency to continue tradition as a routine, in a way that goes unchallenged. But then there were some instances when I just couldn't keep quiet anymore, things that I just had to correct. Like people here say that the Prophet was the first thing God created, even big *marabouts* say that, but it's not true, the first thing God created was a quill, and He told it to write, and it wrote the universe, the history of everything that will happen.

In contrast, Ceerno Ousmane's 16-year-old son Amara Sy also attends an Al-Falah Franco-Arab school in Dakar, and has very different views of the benefits. In contrast to Kalidou Ndiaye, Amara's family is one of the most religiously and politically powerful in the village. Their status very much rests upon the Umariyya Tijaniyya Sufi model of Islam and the authority it accords *toorodo* clerics of *seerembe* lineages. It is therefore unsurprising that Salafi ideology has less appeal for Amara. He stresses less the intrinsic implications of Arabic literacy for his personal religious practice or for challenging local hierarchies, but rather the economic utility of the school. He hopes to use his education to obtain a scholarship to study in Kuwait, and hence access more job opportunities. Indeed, from the 1950s, the leaders of Sufi orders have been sending their sons to Arabic-speaking countries for higher education, after they had attended traditional *daaras* and/or regional Sufi-affiliated Arabic institutes, to invigorate their own practice and guide the reform movement away from anti-Sufi critiques (Ware 2014, p.227).

Overall, however, few young people in Medina Diallobé see much value in learning Arabic; they value the Qur'an more for intrinsic religious benefit, and see French literacy as being more economically useful than Arabic: "There's not much you can do with [Arabo-Islamic] schooling, go to an Arabic country or else do other courses like French" said 21-year-old female *toorodo* Juulde Sy, whose brothers are at boarding *daaras* in Dakar. Malik Ba, *sharia* student, feels the same: "Here *arabisants* [Arabic-speakers] have nothing, there are lots of well-educated people but it doesn't pay. You can teach in a private Arabic school and only earn 50,000CFA (£56) a month, that's

nothing. French is privileged.” As a result, Franco-Arab schools for learning French after memorising the Qur’an appear to be valued over Arabo-Islamic institutes, although they are too expensive for most people. The following section therefore considers how young people obtain religious knowledge and French given these constraints.

7.4 Part-time study alongside the *daara* or state school

This section focuses on young people who consider the *daara* insufficient for teaching French, and the state school inadequate for teaching religion, but lack the means to attend private Franco-Arab schools. Instead, they engage in informal learning alongside full-time attendance in the *daara* or school. If we consider attending fee-charging Islamic schools as a ‘strategy’, to use De Certeau’s terms (1984), of the affluent, informal learning is by contrast an example of ‘tactical’ agency for those without this privilege.

7.41 *Sandas who learn French during or after the daara*

Many *sandas* try to learn French in their spare time. “My brother memorised the Qur’an just, in the Futa. But he also spoke French,” explained *toorodo* Aliou Watt. “He learned it off the pupils he shared a room with, he would take a notebook and ask them questions.” Another 25-year-old *sanda* told me: “I’m learning the Qur’an and *sharia*, but I also have a French teacher, and an English teacher [pointing to his two friends]. Wolof too. You need to know a bit of everything.” Indeed, the first thing most *sandas* would ask me when I met them was whether I could teach them French.

Acquiring French language alongside the *daara* education runs alongside a broader orientation or Islamic identity among young men, which people in Medina Diallobé jokingly referred to as *moderne*. This term was used to refer to young men in Islamic study or professions who engaged in practices, or appropriated symbols, perceived as associated with ‘Western’ culture, such as wearing trainers, baseball caps and baggy trousers, attending *soirées*, or listening to popular music, despite discourses espoused by clerics that such behaviour is frowned upon in Islam. I once visited Omar Sy’s house, and met his resident *sanda*, Hashim, who was listening to a Senegalese rapper on his

phone. Omar exclaimed “A *sanda* who listens to music! So you’re a *sanda moderne*!” to which Hashim laughed somewhat sheepishly. I also observed Salif Ba, the young *toorodo* man with a *daara* education appointed as a *vacataire ustaas* described in the previous chapter, preparing to play football with his friends. His sisters were teasing him for wearing sunglasses, trainers and shorts. Salif quipped “I’m an *ustaas moderne*, see?” to which they all laughed. He added “All the kids in the neighbourhood where I teach laugh at me, because I’m modern.”

Learning French informally while at the *daara* is, however, extremely burdensome. Many *sandas* hope instead to take private lessons after completion. For instance, 26-year-old Abderahmane in my host family had dropped out of CM2 aged 12 and then memorised the Qur’an to completion in a rural *daara* by age 24. He asked me for advice on where he could learn English and French in Dakar for 35,000CFA a month (£40). He hoped to do three months of intensive study to get up to speed, funding himself by teaching Arabic. After spending two months in Dakar however, Abderahmane found finding employment much harder than expected and his plans to learn French fell through.

These challenges *toorobe* boys face to memorise the Qur’an and learn French have not been ameliorated by the state’s recent reforms. The policies developed under Abdoulaye Wade overwhelmingly address primary schooling, catering to today’s children. Yet, they neglect the large number of young *toorodo* men who have chosen a religious education path but lack the funds to study the Qur’an quickly in a boarding *daara* and then supplement their skills in a Franco-Arab school or through private French lessons afterwards. This bias is due to the reforms being elaborated under pressure to meet donor requirements for universal primary school enrolment, rather than by taking a holistic view of the educational needs of the whole population and addressing them accordingly.

Lessons about how to address this problem could be learned through insights from the comparable context of Burkina Faso, where Pilon and Compoare (2009) investigated the phenomenon of private evening classes which follow the state school curriculum, and are held mainly in urban settings. They found that most pupils were male and working in petty trade and similar professions. 35% had dropped out of state schools,

while 7% had been to Islamic schools. The authors show that government and development actors have paid the non-formal adult education sector very little attention, focussing instead on formal schooling. They argue that it would be worthwhile for the state to organise and invest in such evening classes to meet the demands of adolescents and young adults too old to enrol in state primary school, to acquire French literacy to assist in their day-to-day activities. The same might be said of Senegal. Alongside creation of new state religious schools starting from primary level, investment needs to be made in accessible, affordable adult education programs catering especially to less well-off graduates of rural *daaras* to enhance their abilities to learn French to find work.

The state's other proposed school is the "modernised" *daara*, which would have memorisation of the Qur'an as its focus, combined with Arabic and French. However, the state's *daaras* have not yet materialised and are ambitious infrastructural projects requiring significant investment. Many clerics oppose the proposed curriculum for the *daaras*, accusing the state of unconstitutionally trying to control religious education, and treating the *daaras* like existing private schools similar to European models rather than as independent system (Abdourahman 2015; Lo 2015). A recent report shows that clerics in Senegal differ as to whether they would agree to incorporate other subjects including French into their *daaras*. 33% of clerics in 558 *daaras* in Dakar, Louga, Saint-Louis and Matam regions refuse integration of French school subjects in their *daaras* before Qur'anic memorisation is complete. 67% accept on condition that French teaching takes place on *talibés*' days off (Thursdays and Fridays) and does not interfere with the clerics' existing timetable of 30-40 weekly hours of Qur'anic study (MEN 2010, p.67). The report recommends that different strategies be elaborated to respond to different providers' preferences (2010, pp.97–99). Indeed, my data also suggests that, given the diversity of religious education demand among parents and young people, the one-size-fits-all school models proposed by the state seem inappropriate. Rather than trying to standardise all *daara* curricula, including integrating French, a more pragmatic alternative inspired by students' current strategies would be for the state to work alongside *daaras* to provide French lessons to students on their days off. This idea is currently being piloted by NGOs in Senegal.

7.42 Pupils learning Islam alongside secondary state school

Many young *toorodo* men who see the economic utility in state school also strongly value memorising the Qur'an for their personal faith, sense of identity, and *baraka*. Some therefore follow the 'standard model' I heard often, of attending the *daara* when they are young children, and then continuing to attend informally once they begin primary school. A handful of boys manage to continue memorising even while at *collège*. "I learned the Qur'an while doing school, I would take a notebook and ask the *almudbe* in the street for help if I didn't know something!" explained 18-year-old *toorodo* Aliou Watt in 4^{ème} *collège*. I was also interested to hear how Bachir Wane, a 28-year-old *toorodo* university law student, had memorised the Qur'an while attending state school. He explained how he did so, as it was important for his sense of identity as a *toorodo* of clerical lineage:

I finished memorising the Qur'an about four years ago. Because my father is a cleric, it was obligatory! When we went to school, he would make us wake up at 6:30am, we could study the Qur'an for half an hour. We would also do half an hour before going back to school at 4pm. During the summer holidays too, my father would let us rest for one week doing nothing, then we would learn the Qur'an! We were allowed half an hour a day of football and so on, but we had to learn the Qur'an too. All my brothers did the Qur'an and French school this way. If I finish my degree and do a Masters', I'd like to spend a year in Ourousougui or somewhere, just learning *sharia*, it's kind of a hobby of mine.

However, studying informally like this is difficult and takes great self-discipline. Boubacar Tall, a *toorodo* in 1^{er} *lycée* who diligently recited the Qur'an with the *sandas* resident in his compound when not attending school, remarked, "It's hard to blend the two, it takes a lot of time." Indeed, even Boubacar's ability to invest time studying the Qur'an alongside attending *collège* reflected his privilege; he was exempt from any housework as *gallunkoodo* Barro Cissé, described in Chapter Five, did all the work in the Tall household. Many boys at school are therefore often reluctantly obliged to abandon their informal religious study. Ablaye Haïdara, a 20-year-old *toorodo* in terminal year of *lycée*, told me he gave up Qur'anic schooling but is envious of his younger brothers, aged 12 and 18, who followed this path. Samba Ka also stated that "I

don't regret my French education at all. But I regret that I haven't learned the Qur'an, I would like my son to learn it alongside French school."

Given their desires – and often, family pressure - to do both, some *toorodo* boys instead drop out of state school to attend a *daara*. One example is 15-year-old Mohamed Sy from an offshoot of the clerical Sy family. He was in *4ème collège* but failing his lessons and told me he preferred to study the Qur'an. "You can't say you're the son of a *marabout* if you haven't studied the Qur'an!" he said. "See, all of Ceerno Ousmane's sons have learned the Qur'an." However, Mohamed found it impossible to do both while studying full-time at state school: "I've wanted to quit school for ages, because it's hard to do both at once. The hours overlap, it's hard, I can't study the Qur'an 8-10am *and* then go to lessons at 10am, and I can't study in the evenings because I'm tired." Strategies like Mohamed's which, rather than just learning informally alongside full-time education in one kind of school, involve alternating between school types as a means of 'doing both', are considered in more depth in the following section.

It is not only *toorodo* boys who seek to supplement their state schooling with religious knowledge. As few women and non-*toorodo* men from Medina Diallobé can afford to attend reformed Islamic schools and *daaras* in the cities, more commonly they learn religion alongside attending state school full-time. Aissata Sall's school is popular among many local families, and she mainly teaches girls Qur'anic verses, the five pillars of Islam, and how to perform ablution and prayer correctly. Most of her younger students attend on weekdays after school or during the holidays. Parents approve of Aissata's teaching for their daughters, adding that they learn useful invocations as well as Qur'anic verses which are not taught in *daaras*. Oumoul, a 32-year-old *toorodo*, sends her 10-year-old daughter to Aissata's, explaining: "It's a very good education. They don't just learn verses, but for instance invocations, like what to say when you enter the toilet and so on." I heard Zara, an 8-year-old *toorodo* girl, beautifully reciting the Qur'an in one of the bedrooms in her home, and she explained that Aissata was doing a conference and had asked for them to sing to see who was best.

Women and non-*toorodo* men also learn the religion informally. Some older women visit Aissata Sall, as she explained: "Even older women here don't know how to pray. They come to ask me, they're ashamed to ask the clerics about that. Like how to do

their ablutions and how to pray, as no one ever taught them exactly.” 20-year-old Fatimata Ndaw and 16-year-old Oulymata Ba, both *toorobe*, also told me that they go to Aissata’s during the summer holidays. However, more commonly adolescents and adults study independently. A few, usually *toorodo* women of clerical lineages, memorise the Qur’an. For instance, I observed 30-year-old *toorodo* Maimouna Sy reciting from a copy she had at home. Some study Arabic language, like Maimouna’s 16-year-old niece Houley Sy who sometimes leafed through a beginner’s primer which her boyfriend, a *sanda*, had given her. More commonly however, women and non-*toorodo* men seek out information about correct Islamic practice and invocations or *du’a*. For instance, Maimouna often felt tired and her sleep was disturbed by nightmares. Her *dabotoodo* cousin Seydou Noor diagnosed the illness as ‘*rafi baleejo*’, a ‘black person illness’ caused by *jinn*. It could only be cured using the Qur’an, unlike ‘*rafi daneejo*’ or ‘white person illness’ which can be treated by doctors using Western medicine. As part of her healing strategy, Maimouna kept a notebook of invocations and Qur’anic verses that she would recite to herself. I overheard her asking her younger brothers, who had both memorised the Qur’an to advanced level, if they could teach her the verse Ya-Sin (36:1), considered to have powerful protective properties. It is interesting to note that while Maimouna sends her own daughter Zara to Aissata’s to learn the Qur’an, she goes elsewhere for knowledge linked to healing. This is not surprising firstly given the personal and private nature of her afflictions.

Another common way people learn religion informally is through books, usually written in French. 28-year-old *baylo* Ismaila Gueye, *lycée* teacher, told me that although he did not have time to memorise the whole Qur’an, “I try to learn from time to time, I have a Qur’an translated into French that I bought in Dakar. That way I understand what God says. And I go to my friends, the *sandas* who live nearby, and ask them for clarifications.” In addition to copies of the Qur’an, whether the original or versions translated into French, people own a variety of other works reflecting both Sufi and anti-Sufi perspectives. Several families possess a copy of *Al Akhdari*³⁶, a primer on

³⁶ The original Arabic title of *Al Akhdari* is *Mukhtasar fi al 'Ibadat 'ala Madhhab al Imam Malik* written by Abd Al-Rahman b. Muhammad al-Saghir al-Akhdari al-Buntuyusi al-Maliki (d. 1585). It was translated into French under the title *Mukhtasar Al-Akhdari Fi al 'Ibadat: La prière selon la rite malekite* (2009), and English as *The treatise of Sheikh Sidy Abd Rahmaan Al Akhdari on the jurisprudence of acts of worship according to the school of Imam Malik Bin Annas* (Saidy n.d.). The pulaar version is *Jubbannde Ceerno Abdarraahmaan Lakhday: Fiqhu...laawal e juulde e laawol Almaami Maalik* (Bah 2001). Hall and Stewart (2011, p.134) identify *Al Akhdari* as a didactic text or teaching tool, used at relatively elementary

prayer and ablutions according to the Maliki school of law, usually in French although I saw one version in Pulaar. Several young *toorodo* women mentioned this book when explaining how they had learned how to pray. 32-year-old Djenaba showed me her father's copy of *Dimensions d'Islam: Selon le Coran et la Sounnah* (Dimensions of Islam according to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*) by Senegalese Tijani Sufi Amadou Tall (1992). She recommended it for the many *du'a* and invocations it mentions, as well as information on the five pillars, prayer and ablutions. Reflecting mystic interpretations of Islam, *Dimensions d'Islam* has been criticised by anti-Sufis for being *shirk* or *bid'a*³⁷. Oumoul Sy, 32-year-old *toorodo*, explained how she had learned about "invocations, the Prophet's life, the *Sunnah*, behaviour within the family, how to treat your neighbours, how to dress, and how to be professional" from *La voie du musulman*³⁸ (the Way of the Muslim) by Algerian Cheikh Aboubaker Djaber Eldjazairi (1964) which she bought when studying at university in St Louis. Despite the fact that it reflects the strongly Salafi views of its author, a lecturer at the University of Medina³⁹, Oumoul who is affiliated to the Tijanniyya nonetheless appreciates the book for the advice it contains on *sharia*. Kalidou Ndiaye, mentioned above, informed me of several books reflecting Salafi creed which he had read at a library in St Louis including *Kashf ush-Shubuhaat* and *Al-Usool-uth-Thalaatha* by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.⁴⁰

In a similar way to the example of attendance at Al-Falah Franco-Arab school, the religious books people read are not necessarily indicative of their Islamic orientation,

levels of education. They suggest that *Al Akhdari* (or possibly, a set of slightly different derivative texts all known locally as *Al Akhdari*, aimed at helping students commit it to memory), was perhaps the most important didactic text for beginners used across the Sahel from Mauritania to northern Nigeria in the 19th century.

³⁷ For instance, several websites selling the book, such as

http://www.iqrashop.com/Dimensions_de_l_Islam-Amadou_Tall-Livre_livres-Initiation_a_l_Islam-1758-.html include a message stating "Important remark: We warn readers that this book contains dangerous things which do not conform to Islam or the Sunna of the Prophet" (my translation). This webpage includes a debate between reviewers of the book for and against its content (accessed 3rd September 2014).

³⁸ *Minhaj al Moslim* (Djaber Eldjazairi 1964) is a two-volume comprehensive guide to Islamic creed, etiquette, worship, relationships and business transactions translated into French under the title *La voie du Musulman* (Chakroun 1997), and into English as *The way of the Muslim* (Mujahid 2001).

³⁹ See the debate between reviewers of the book on

<http://www.sunniforum.com/forum/showthread.php?18443-Book-Minhaj-Al-Muslim> (accessed 3rd September 2014).

⁴⁰ *Kashf ush-Shubuhaat*, translated as 'Clarification of the Doubts', is a treatise on *shirk* or polytheism. The English translation and commentary is *An explanation of Muhammad' Ibn 'Abd ul-Wahhab's A Critical Study of Shirk, ar. Kashfash-Shubuhaat* (Yasir Qadhi 2003). *Al-Usool-uth-Thalaatha*, or The Three Fundamental Principles, based on the three questions asked after death, has been translated into English as *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islaam* (Al-Uthaymeen n.d.).

and the consumption of Salafi literature for information on *sharia* does not preclude affiliation to the Tijaniyya Sufi order and esoteric worldview. This is similar to Lambek's (1993, p.61) analysis of how people frequented Islamic and spirit healers on the Comores archipelago, as "claims of mutual exclusion are transcended in the practice of ordinary people".

However, while informal learning from religious books enables those excluded from the *daara* to study Islam, in general such materials are an expensive luxury and access to this medium reflects and perpetuates hierarchies of wealth and status. There is a trader who sells Islamic books and pamphlets at the weekly market in Medina Diallobé, but most books people own were purchased further away such as in Dakar or even during visits to Mecca. It was not uncommon for households to have no books, and all the people cited above who owned any come from affluent *toorodo* families and/or have salaried jobs. Saharan scholars have for centuries amassed large libraries of religious books to build their reputations and prestige (Lydon 2004), and the one such example I heard of in Medina Diallobé had been compiled by El Hajji Sy, deceased member of the clerical Sy family. His son, 15-year-old Mohamed, described how his father had amassed a significant library of books in French, Arabic and Pulaar through his travels including to study at Al-Azhar. I discovered the extent to which books are considered a highly valuable commodity when I gave a photocopied English-Pulaar dictionary to some of my friends. Assuming it would be shared with other family members interested in using it, it was coveted and created some jealousy. In a similar vein, Mohamed told me that El Hajji had encouraged him to read his books, but once his father passed away, his library had been confined to the care of his cousin, *dabotoodo* Seydou Noor, and Mohamed felt he could no longer access them.

In addition to books, people also learn through cassette sermons. Several members of my host family explained how El Hajji Sy's elderly sister, Astou, possessed several cassettes of sermons recorded by local clerics in Pulaar which they listened to. 18-year-old Hadja told me that one of these cassettes explained how to fast during Ramadan, how it was sinful to believe that Jesus is God, and how to behave well towards others including Christians. Circulation of cassettes is however not particularly common. While many households own televisions or radios, only a handful has a cassette player. Hadja also showed me a cartoon film on her phone, labelled as coming from website

www.islamexplained.com, depicting angels judging the souls of the dead, the paradise awaiting the believer, and the abyss of fire the unbeliever. Hadja told me her classmate had shown her the video, and she copied it onto her own phone.

However, the most accessible way for state school pupils to learn religion informally appears to be through attending public conferences, and sometimes taking written notes alongside. For instance, 26-year-old *toorodo* Coumba Sakho explained that:

I continue to learn all the time, I learn everyday. I write it all down in a notebook and learn it. Like what is good, what is bad. I learn at conferences when clerics talk, on the TV, people telling stories... For instance, a cleric here was saying *qul huwallahu*⁴¹ is such an important *surat*, you can recite it three times for protection or healing.

Baylo Hamidou Thiam also explained how several young men of the *waylube* community attend Islamic conferences to learn informally, and compensate for their exclusion from the local *daaras*:

It's rare to see someone from Mbayla learn the Qur'an to the end, although my uncles and grandparents live in a village called Bélinaydé⁴², they are all *waylube* there, they are big *marabouts*, all have learnt the Qur'an to the end and are jewellers too. But here it's rare. Even if you learn to the end, you can't become a cleric or even lead prayer, so people think, why bother? They learn the basics. But the youth go to Bélinaydé for a *ziara* which takes place after *korité* [Eid al-Adha]. That way they celebrate religious learning and their caste.

These examples corroborate a trend documented in Muslim societies around the globe, namely how increased availability of print and electronic media over the 20th century has facilitated alternatives to face-to-face, individualized knowledge transmission. This has enabled more people to study part-time outside of formal Islamic study (Adely &

⁴¹ *Qul huwallahu* is the local term for *surat al-ikhlās*, 112th verse of the Qur'an.

⁴² Bélinaydé Mbayla (alternatively spelt Bélnaïbé Mbaïla) is a village in the region of Matam, and is one of the rare villages in the Futa Tooro inhabited solely by *ñeeñbe*, in this case *waylube*. Many have abandoned their customary profession of smithing to become clerics. One in particular, Ceerno Abdoulaye Paate Mbow, is well-known throughout the region for his erudition and esoteric skills (Kyburz 1994, p.152).

Starrett 2011; Eickelman & Piscatori 1996; Hirschkind 2006). While many scholars have noted how democratisation of access to Islamic knowledge has enabled women (Dilger & Schulz 2013; Kalmbach 2012) and youth (Adely & Starrett 2011; Janson 2010) to challenge their customary exclusion from knowledge and hence religious authority, the evidence from Medina Diallobé shows that this is equally applicable to the destabilisation of hierarchies based on social category. These stories also reveal that an important element in people's increased access to part-time religious education is French literacy, another form of value that state schools have for Medina Diallobé inhabitants. However, while challenging older patterns of exclusion from formal Islamic education, informal study through media is affected by differential access to commodities such as books, cassette players, and phones. While open to a wider set of people than private reformed schools, again media is more accessible to those from affluent families, whether based on customary sources of privilege or rare jobs in the formal sector.

Having thus far considered attendance in reformed Islamic schools and informal study as ways of 'doing both', the subsequent and final section looks at a third form of strategy to address this challenge; alternating between different school types.

7.5 Alternating between school types

All young people I met who attended private Islamic schools and boarding *daaras* did so in combination with other school types. For instance, Tidiane Ba, 26-year-old *toorodo* and older brother to *sharia* student Malik Ba, recounted his trajectory: "I memorised the Qur'an in a boarding *daara* in Dakar. Then it took me three years to get the bac in French in a Franco-Arab school." Aissata Sall, the 24-year-old *toorodo* teaching girls in the village, also told a comparable story, stressing how she wanted to complete the Qur'an before learning Arabic or French: "When I was ten I started at an Arabo-Islamic boarding school in Dakar. I learned the Qur'an first while at the same time learning Arabic, but I gave up Arabic to concentrate on the Qur'an. I finished memorising the Qur'an when I was fifteen. When I was sixteen I went to Al-Falah Franco-Arab school." Mamadou Sow, a 24-year-old *toorodo sanda* who had studied at Ceerno Alfa's *daara* for ten years, also hoped to learn French in a Franco-Arab school

after the *daara*: “I’ve finished the Qur’an, now I’m learning *sharia*. My father, who’s in Greece, refused that I go to French school, but said that once I finish I can go to a Franco-Arab school and learn French there.”

All of these young people’s trajectories share a common element. They value and prioritise memorisation of the Qur’an over other forms of religious knowledge. Attendance in Arabo-Islamic or Franco-Arab schools to learn Arabic and/or French takes place *after* memorisation of the Qur’an. I knew of no cases of young people who had only attended Arabo-Islamic or Franco-Arab schools without having memorised a large proportion – if not all – of the Qur’an first. While learning Arabic but especially French are considered useful, these subjects are considered secondary and should be learned after the Qur’an. The following quote from 21-year-old *toorodo* woman Juulde Sy captures this sentiment:

My little [8-year-old] brother is at a [fee-charging] *daara* in Dakar. My mother wants him to learn fast, because he’s young he can, and he can finish in a few years. Then, when he’s 11 or 12, he can go to a Franco-Arab school. Some teach Arabic with a bit of the Qur’an, others less Qur’an or not at all. But, the Qur’an is the most important, it’s the religion. The Franco-Arab school is like French school with something added, i.e. Arabic. But Arabic is just a language, not the Qur’an. The Franco-Arab school may well put an end to the Qur’an, but it’s important to put it in perspective, the Qur’an *is* the religion.

Juulde’s uncle, Yaya, expressed a very similar opinion about Franco-Arab schools: “They are just secular schools with a bit of Arabic thrown in, invented by people who brought back knowledge of Arabic culture, etc. from the Arab world. But knowing Arabic isn’t the same as knowing Islam.” Indeed, Ware cites several clerics from both Tijan and Murid parts of Senegal who feel that Franco-Arab schools prioritise Arabic literacy over moral education. As one remarks: “In the *daara* we teach *and* educate: that’s the difference. [In the *école arabe*,] Arabic comes first. But the moral education has a way to go.” Ware paraphrases another, saying

Although students learn good spoken Arabic and even much about religion, books are read without a component of spiritual education and thus too easily

become *xam-xamu saay-saay* (cynical knowledge) – knowledge without faith or religious practice (2014, p.230).

These educational trajectories and associated evaluations of knowledge push us to question the applicability to Senegal of conclusions made by Brenner (2000) in the neighbouring context of Mali. He argues that greater supply of reformed Islamic schools teaching religious and secular subjects (known in Mali as *médersas*) has led to greater value being accorded to Arabic literacy than memorisation of the Qur'an, with people even rejecting the legitimacy of esoteric forms of Islamic knowledge. However, in line with evidence from across Senegal including Dakar, Medina Gounass and the Murid heartland of Djourbel (Smith 2008, pp.58, 88), the majority of Medina Diallobé inhabitants who are committed to pursuing an advanced Islamic education still accord memorisation of the Qur'an the highest value among the types of religious knowledge available, including for *baraka* and other embodied and esoteric properties. Thus, people invest in learning Arabic or French in Arabo-Islamic or Franco-Arab schools only after attending a *daara*.

Brenner's analysis suggests that the shift in Mali towards higher evaluations of Arabic literacy over Qur'anic memorisation is linked to the material status that *médersa* graduates in Mali enjoy, as they are more likely to be employed in the state bureaucracy than Qur'anic school graduates (2000, p.16). In contrast to Mali however, the Sufi orders in Senegal have far more political influence than reformist Islamic associations. As shown in Chapter Two, the *toorodo* aristocracy of the Futa Tooro have translated their customary status – derived largely through memorisation of the Qur'an and acquisition of *baraka* – and wealth into contemporary political connections and economic capital. This continues to make their 'occupations' of trade and migration more attractive than the main professions available to reformed Islamic school graduates, namely teaching Arabic in private or public schools. Therefore, in Medina Diallobé the logic of value which the *toorodo* clerical elite subscribes to, which prioritises memorisation of the Qur'an over Arabic literacy, continues to enjoy popular support.

It is also interesting to consider what kinds of professions young *toorodo* men hope to secure through "multiskilling" (Froerer & Portisch 2012, p.339) by attending different

school types. The opinion of government and development actors, described in Chapter One, is that state school diplomas are useful for finding work especially in the formal economy; the Arabo-Islamic and Franco-Arab schools are useful for employment as an *ustaas*; and the *daaras* are not particularly useful for earning income. However, *toorodo* men from Medina Diallobé who combine memorisation of the Qur'an with French or Arabic literacy see rather different forms of utility and have contrasting career intentions. As noted previously, becoming Arabic teachers is low on their list of aspirations. Rather, some *toorodo* boys hope to use their combined educational trajectories to pursue more lucrative and prestigious Islamic professions in the globalised religious and prayer economies. Mohamed Sy, 15-year-old *toorodo* of *sharif* descent, explains how, seeing as he already has the essential skill of French literacy, *collège* diplomas are not as economically useful as memorising the Qur'an:

If I did the Qur'an to the end, I would go to America and do *dabaade*. My uncle does that in the Congo. Especially if you say you're a *sharif* people will give you *addiya*. Or you can be the imam of a mosque, they pay you each month. My mother's brother, he's an imam at a mosque in America. Even my father did that, getting *addiya* in America. If I finished French school I could still go to the USA, but what job could I do?!

Mohamed's uncle Omar Sy is another example of a middle-class *toorodo* man of *sharif* descent, with an educational trajectory combining state school and religious education, who uses his knowledge repertoire to reinvent the customary local profession of *dabotoodo*. 48-year-old Omar is fluent in French and Arabic having been raised in Mauritania where he attended state school to baccalaureate level. He also memorised one tenth of the Qur'an with *sandas*. When aged 18 he started to learn *dabaade* from his father in Medina Diallobé. He trained as a teacher, works as a school director, and as a *dabotoodo* overseas during the school holidays:

Mystique, healing, divination is my job, alongside teaching. People come from five, ten, even fifteen kilometres away over the border in Mauritania to consult me. I have travelled a lot, to Morocco over a hundred times, to Tunisia, Saudi Arabia. I hope to go to Jordan during the holidays, to earn a bit of money, and invest it back in some business projects. With my job and some contacts I have

in the government, I could get a visa to go to France. I think it would work, there is a lot of demand there.

These aspirations further challenge the state's and development actors' assumptions described in Chapter One that Qur'anic memorisation holds only personal and spiritual benefit, while Arabic and French literacy and school diplomas are useful for finding work principally in the formal sector. Instead, these *toorobe* men from Medina Diallobé are using French and Arabic literacy, acquired through combined school trajectories, to reconfigure, 'modernise', and internationalise the customary *toorodo* religious professions of clerics, imams and *dabotoobe*. Such strategies build on the precedent of West African Sufis using state school knowledge to enhance their *baraka* and legitimacy (Clarke 1988)⁴³, and Senegalese Sufi orders creating vibrant transnational networks which link clerics and disciples, and providers and consumers within the prayer economy, over increasingly large distances (Buggenhagen 2010; Hill 2012; Soares 2004). In pursuit of education which combines religious and secular elements, young *toorodo* men in Medina Diallobé are not drawn to piety movements or reformist interpretations of Islam which denounce mysticism, a trend commonly documented among middle-classes in other parts of the Muslim world. Rather, their mixed education is based on valorisation of esoteric forms of Islam, including Qur'anic memorisation for accumulation of *baraka*, and status through *sharif* lineage, to appeal to prayer economy clientele in the West African diaspora but also Arab world. Their strategies provide support for recent arguments that "anthropological understanding of Islam's articulation with the contemporary cannot simply be confined to general pre-occupations with and anxieties over the modern, be these in the guise of Islamist political agendas or middle class piety" (Marsden & Retsikas 2013, p.21), if it means neglecting the ways affluent and middle-class Sufis are transforming their learning and praxis to adapt to the opportunities of globalisation.

⁴³ Clarke describes the case of Muhammad Jumat Imam, a charismatic Sufi leader from Ijebuland in south-western Nigeria, who claimed in 1941 to be the Mahdi or renewer of the age. At the time, the position of Chief Imam at the mosque in Ijebu-Ode, capital of Ijebuland, was contested, and Jumat Imam argued that the other candidates were not qualified as they lacked knowledge of Arabic and English. Clarke states "That such a view was met with the support of many is an indication of how both the expansion of Western education and the improvements in Islamic education (attributable to, among other organisations, the Ansar-ud-Deen society and the Islamic Reformation Society founded by the Mahdi in the 1930s) were altering the traditional criteria for leadership. Learning was becoming almost as important as age, seniority, and good character, once the main and virtually the sole requirements for leadership." (Clarke 1988, pp.159–160).

Finally, the kinds of knowledge people in Medina Diallobé value, and the educational trajectories they pursue to acquire that knowledge, raise questions about whether the state's recent reforms will meet people's demands to learn both religious and secular knowledge. To clarify, among local residents wanting to memorise the Qur'an, the preferred strategy is to do so in childhood without competing demands of learning other subjects, as it is easiest to assimilate the text at this age. However, the state school model since the colonial period dictates that the official 'correct' age at which pupils ought to start primary is seven, and that pupils must learn several subjects simultaneously. Thus, the state school timetable has been designed in such a way as to be incompatible with many local people's learning priorities of memorising the Qur'an. There is widespread evidence throughout Senegal that since the colonial period parents have overcome this challenge by sending their children to the *daara*, and arranging for their birth certificate to be forged so that they can enrol in primary afterwards at the 'correct' official age (Ware 2004a, p.86). The state school today is still incompatible with people's desires. Children enrolling in the first year of primary school later than age seven are automatically considered for statistical purposes as 'over-age', perceived by state and development actors as a problem because curricula are not adapted for multi-grade classes (Lewin 2008; Little 2008). Local people have sadly internalised this negative construction of their being 'behind', as Kalidou Ndiaye stated after he told me that he is taking his baccalaureate aged 24 because he spent his childhood in *daaras* and Islamic schools: "I'm behind. But being behind is programmed into being African."

The state's reforms since 2002 claimed to respond to popular demand for Islamic education combined with secular subjects. However, rather than taking memorisation of the Qur'an as the priority, the state's new Franco-Arab primary schools and *collèges* follow a schedule reminiscent of the existing state schools, teaching the Qur'an, Arabic, French, and secular topics simultaneously from the first years of primary. This should not be surprising given that one of the government's main incentives was to meet donor demands for universal primary enrolment, and hence reformed Islamic schools had to conform to the now globally universal school model inherited from the European experience, including the 'core curriculum' described in Chapter One. Indeed, the state's Franco-Arab schools mirror closely the Salafi-inspired reformist Islamic schools, which privilege Arabic literacy and Islamic sciences over Qur'anic memorisation, as

they were also inspired by the European model of school. The state Franco-Arab primary school curriculum teaches memorisation of only one-tenth of the Qur'an which is inadequate for inhabitants of Medina Diallobé. Similarly, the recently proposed official curriculum for *daaras* allocates only three years to memorisation of the Qur'an before proceeding to the existing primary school syllabus (Lo 2015).

The way in which Islamic knowledge has been integrated into the Senegalese state school system is similar to the ways in which 'indigenous knowledge' has been added to school curricula in other contexts. For instance, in the context of Australia, Nakata (2007) argues that caution needs to be taken when attempting to integrate indigenous knowledge into school curricula. Too often, understandings of indigenous knowledge are separated from the people and processes through which this knowledge is produced and valued, and instead interpreted by Western knowledge specialists. What aspects of indigenous knowledge get represented in schools, and how, "reflects a complex set of intersections of interests and contestations" including

what aspects of knowledge are recognised or valued; what can be envisioned in terms of [...] utility; [...] to the particular interests of scientists or disciplinary sectors; [...] to what is misinterpreted during the process of abstracting indigenous knowledge; and what remains marginalised at the peripheries and at risk of being written out, not recognised as valid knowledge, or forgotten (2007, p.9).

The fact that some forms of Islamic knowledge have been integrated into state schools in Senegal is a significant improvement from people's perspectives, compared to the school system devoid of religious content prior to 2002. However, the kinds of knowledge prioritised (namely Arabic literacy over Qur'anic memorisation, for the end of literal understanding of the Qur'an and work in the formal sector over acquisition of *baraka*), and the format and schedule of teaching adopted, all reflect the agendas of the state and international development actors to meet EFA, and the value-system characteristic of Salafi-inspired Muslim reformers influenced by European school models, as opposed to the high valorisation of *baraka* and moral transformation within a *daara* education valued by Medina Diallobé inhabitants. I agree with Smith (2008, p.84) that unfortunately "neither Arab oil-exporting countries nor the western donors are

willing to support and develop a school system contrary to their social and educational norms, even if it qualifies students and answers the needs of the population.”

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter illuminated the means employed by parents and young people in Medina Diallobé to enable the latter to ‘do both’, i.e. to combine religious and secular knowledge. These trajectories break down the idea of different school types as separate in lived terms, and as in Chapter Four challenge the dichotomy between formal and informal modes of learning prevalent in much educational research. These multiple and varied pathways reflect similar common preoccupations, but large differences in ability to realise those aspirations.

People’s strategies also illustrate continued state failure to deliver an accessible and adapted school supply which meets popular demands. Religious knowledge – including memorisation of the Qur’an - is important for many people’s sense of social well-being. Religious authority carries significant social influence, and current patterns of unequal access to Islamic education underpin unequal relationships of power. Broadening access to religious knowledge and authority is therefore a social justice issue of the same order of importance as access to secular knowledge, and should therefore feature as a development priority. The state’s recent reforms have had little impact on Medina Diallobé’s immediate educational landscape or on people’s opportunities, demonstrating barriers to distributive justice. Indeed, for young people who wish to ‘do both’ a clear distinction has emerged between those who can afford the strategy of private or Islamic schools, and those obliged to engage in informal learning as a tactic to address their exclusion – customary or financial – from schools that meet their needs.

Furthermore, young people’s trajectories of alternating between different school types also raise several questions about the potential of the state’s recent reforms to deliver curricular justice. The state’s new Islamic schools and proposed “modern” *daaras* place emphasis on French and Arabic literacy and do not enable full memorisation of the Qur’an. Indeed, rather than using people’s own logics of educational value to guide their conceptions of new schools, state actors have developed these schools from the

standpoint of their own epistemological and pedagogical framework. They have engaged with certain types of Islamic knowledge but less with others, essentially functionalising Islam to meet international development agendas of EFA and the MDGs. Nonetheless, young people's strategies point to possible educational responses adapted to Qur'anic schools' current functioning which the state, policy-makers and practitioners could consider.

These trajectories also uncover the shifting bases of Islamic authority. In some aspects, tactics among young people in Medina Diallobé to 'do both' outside of formal institutions challenge customary barriers and destabilises *toorodo* men's monopoly over religious knowledge. However, these tactics reveal differential access to media, reflecting these young people's relative access to wealth. Furthermore, although increased support for women's Islamic education in Medina Diallobé potentially promises to meet women's unmet need for religious knowledge, this development needs to be tempered as its acceptance appears to be contingent on its compatibility with patriarchal social norms and male power. Indeed, men's support for women's Islamic education appears to be largely premised on its potential to maintain women's subordinate social position. A comparable observation can be made with respect to the broadening of access to religious knowledge according to social category. While this chapter shows that *rimbe* other than *toorobe* are able to claim Islamic authority with their knowledge through studying elsewhere, Chapter Four on *waylube* men studying at *daaras* outside the Futa Tooro shows that this is not the case for *ñeeñbe*. No wonder, as it would pose a more profound threat to the social order upheld by the *toorodo* clerics.

These educational trajectories also uncover the multiple ways people realise themselves as 'being Muslim'. They add weight to arguments against using descriptive labels such as 'Sufi' or 'Salafi', 'Wahhabi' and 'reformist' uncritically, as while of course there can be clashes between people of different ideological stances, these should not eclipse the fact that most ordinary people draw upon a range of ideological resources in their everyday lives including seeking and consuming various forms of Islamic knowledge from different and even opposing theological viewpoints simultaneously. Everyday projects of self-making as practiced by the *sandas* or *ustaa's* to articulate a 'modern' Islamic youth identity which draws upon customary forms of advanced Islamic education as well as elements of popular youth culture also reveal the complexity of

identity constructions in contemporary Muslim contexts. Finally, these articulations of Islam are not limited to pre-occupations with Islamist political agendas or middle-class piety, forms of Muslim modernity which receive most scholarly attention. Indeed, young men of *seerembe* and *sharif* lineages in Medina Diallobé are less likely to be attracted to disenchanted forms of Islam, than pursuing Qur'anic memorisation within the Tijaniyya Sufi network of *daaras* combined with French literacy. Thus they embrace international travel and overseas economic opportunities to enhance and reconfigure their social role and religious authority as Islamic scholars, and specialists in the prayer economy, embedded within a mystic Islamic paradigm.

Chapter 8. Contributions to an applied anthropology of education and development

8.1 Introduction

This thesis opened with the observation that people's patterns of educational decision-making between state and Islamic schools, in the commune of Medina Diallobé in northern Senegal, run counter to dominant 'common sense' expectations within international development and comparative education scholarship. This final chapter presents the insights generated from investigating the actual logics informing people's trajectories, by paying combined attention to their preferences and practical factors affecting realisation of those preferences. While this village reflects a particular and unique configuration of actors, relationships and dynamics, it is situated in a wider region which shares historical and social conditions shaping education provision and preference in similar ways. As earlier chapters have shown, education preferences in this village are also comparable to those in other Muslim societies and developing countries more generally. Insights from Medina Diallobé are therefore relevant to the study of education and development more broadly.

This chapter unpacks the theoretical and methodological challenges that people's preferences in Medina Diallobé pose to dominant conceptualisations of educational decision-making, especially in relation to faith-based schooling. In addition, these findings are used to make contributions to broader anthropological debates, particularly the influence of faith-based ideas on development scholarship and practice, and the shifting constructions of gendered, Muslim and social category-based identities in contemporary West African and Islamic contexts. These threads are woven together to complete this ethnography in the spirit of applied anthropology of education. This entails not only exploring the values and meanings people attribute to education, its role in projects of self-realisation, and constraints on these aspirations and ensuing inequalities, but also contributing to practical debates around the modalities required to improve existing educational provision to promote social justice.

8.2 Faith, wealth and school trajectories: “Quality education” and preference revisited

The first assumption that this thesis tackled is that state schools constitute ‘quality’ education conferring economic benefit while Qur’anic schools do not, which supposedly drives school choice. This assumption rests on the logic, informed by Human Capital and traditional Rational Choice theory, that there exist objective and universal economic and social benefits to pupils of mass state schooling, and that economic incentives are the main factor informing school preference. However, the historical account of schooling in Senegal complements evidence from multiple contexts in resource-poor countries which demonstrate that the global school model and its associated definition of ‘quality’ education is far from objective and value-neutral. Instead, it reflects the materialist and secularist biases of a system developed in nineteenth century Europe for creating a skilled labour force. In Senegal, many aspects of the form and content of this school model continue to be incompatible with livelihood and cultural realities, people’s worldviews and epistemologies, and other valued educational opportunities such as Qur’anic schooling and/or apprenticeship, manual or domestic work.

Furthermore, evidence from Medina Diallobé demonstrates that people do not only take economic returns into account when evaluating education. In addition, they consider intrinsic value and material value including through improvements in status. It is important to stress the importance of intrinsic value, as although education features strongly in strategies of social mobility (Froerer & Portisch 2012), it is also implicated in people’s projects of self-realisation in less materialistic ways. By acknowledging intrinsic value, one avoids attributing the popularity of faith-based schools to solely instrumental reasons, such as economic deprivation, as is common in much Western sociological and economic scholarship.

Indeed, the value Medina Diallobé residents confer on accumulation of *baraka* within Qur’anic schools is rooted in an epistemology which recognises the intrinsic sacred value of the Qur’anic text, and possible transmission of blessing between people, for personal spiritual benefit in this life and the next. The idea of *baraka* is poorly understood, or rejected as superstition, by people - including many Western-educated

scholars - unfamiliar with this worldview, who are quick to dismiss the Qur'anic school as having little use. However, comprehending the intrinsic value people accord to acquisition of *baraka* is essential to understanding the continued popularity of *daara* education in Senegal. These insights are sorely needed, as despite significant anthropological interest in Islam in Africa, research on reasons for people's engagement with Islamic schooling in contemporary African contexts is relatively under-studied (although for exceptions see Butler 2006; Hoechner 2011; 2014; Launay n.d.; Ware 2004b; Ware 2014).

These findings contribute to broader debates in anthropology of development, by responding to recent calls that greater attention be accorded to the role of religion in framing theory and practice. Rather than focusing solely on the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs), scholars (e.g. Clarke 2013; Deneulin & Bano 2009; Deneulin & Rakodi 2011) argue that we must use faith as a broader lens of analysis to uncover the often hidden ways in which faith-based ideologies – including constructions of secularism – permeate development theory and practice. This thesis does that by revealing how contrasting theoretical ideas about the appropriate role of faith in schooling pervade different forms of education provision in Senegal, and how power relations underpin which ideologies dominate. Indeed, despite rejection of the secularisation thesis by Western social scientists, implicit assumptions associated with it continue to permeate Western education theory and international education policy. The practical implications are that state schools in Senegal are still based on a predominantly secular and rationalist model despite the religious affiliation of the population and their demand for faith-based education within an esoteric Islamic paradigm.

While it is important to acknowledge intrinsic value underpinning education preference, this thesis also shows that people are more likely to accord intrinsic value to education if it coincides with material and economic benefits. Notions of 'educational utility' are constructed based on context-specific experiences, historical trends, and social, economic and political realities. To illustrate, evidence presented in this thesis reveals that the widespread academic assumption that Qur'anic schools have declined in popularity among all but the poorest parents, in favour of state or private Islamic schools for economic and social skills, reflects the colonial and post-colonial experiences of many majority-Muslim countries, but not all. In French West Africa, but

Senegal in particular given the high number of Sufi orders which emerged by the early 20th century, Qur'anic schools have been protected against the competing options of state schools and reformist Islamic schools. This unusual situation is linked to French colonial policy informed by *laïcité* and *Islam noir*, and the charismatic Sufi leaders' continued economic, social and political power after independence.

In the Futa Tooro region specifically, Qur'anic schooling prior to colonisation was embedded in a social hierarchy in which clerics dominated economic and political power. It conferred status and self-worth on men from *toorodo* clerical lineages, but also economic skills for agricultural livelihoods, trade, and religious professions among *seerembe* lineages, supplemented with *addiya* in the case of *sharif*. Qur'anic school education still confers material benefits today as it is compatible with careers through internal and international migration. These sources of income, as well as conversion of customary political authority into elected positions, have been dominated by the Haalpulaar clerical aristocracy to maintain their social position. Perceptions of the material and economic value of Qur'anic schools among *toorobe* in Medina Diallobé is further supported by the village's reputation for Islamic scholarship, thriving market and legacy of male emigration. The assumption in development studies that Qur'anic schools inevitably give way to state or private Islamic schools for the economic advantages of the latter therefore needs to be problematized to take into account alternative patterns of school preference grounded in specific economic contexts.

Indeed, these findings contest wider presumptions informed by the secularisation thesis that religion will retreat to the private sphere and is incompatible with economic growth. The religious economy in Senegal, diaspora and other Islamic countries, towards which middle-class male *toorobe* from Medina Diallobé are increasingly orienting themselves, contributes to a growing body of evidence that although religion diversifies during processes of modernisation, it does not necessarily decline. Faith-infused trajectories of economic growth are possible and even compatible with neoliberal economies (Otayek & Soares 2007, pp.18–19; Rudnycky 2009; Tripp 2006). Nonetheless, the prejudice that overt expressions of religion are incompatible with modernity and economic growth remain within mainstream economics, development studies, and much Western development practice (Jackson & Fleischer 2007). The resulting assumption that strong faith-based schools, teaching a predominantly moral

education over the ‘core curriculum’ of literacy and numeracy, do not have economic benefits is therefore based on a narrow understanding of how these schools are linked to the learning of trades, and ignores the thriving market for religious knowledge and skills in Medina Diallobé, other African contexts (Butler 2006; Soares 2005) and African diaspora (Gemmeke 2011; Soares 2004).

People’s trajectories also reveal flaws in presenting state and Islamic schools, formal and informal learning, or public and private spheres, as separate, despite the fact that such distinctions are pervasive in educational debates (c.f. Froerer & Portisch 2012, pp.339–340; Lave 2011; Naji 2012; Rogers 2004). Indeed, people’s everyday educational practices, where they both seek and impart knowledge within different institutions and learning spheres, form part of coherent strategies of self-making. For instance, Qur’anic school education for boys and informal socialisation practices by women in the home are both mutually constitutive of *toorodo* identity rooted in religious piety. Similarly, obtaining both religious knowledge and skills associated with the state schools is a preoccupation for everyone in Medina Diallobé, pursued through a variety of creative strategies and tactics. These various pathways often reflect similar common preoccupations, but large differences in abilities to realise those aspirations. They support academic arguments in favour of going beyond formal/informal distinctions, and their theoretical and methodological implications, when making sense of the role of education in forming persons and their trajectories.

The assumption that Qur’anic schools supposedly lack economic benefits is accompanied by the presumption that state schools confer unequivocal social and economic returns. This thesis builds on a growing body of qualitative anthropological literature (Froerer 2011; 2012; Froerer & Portisch 2012; Heissler 2011; Jeffrey et al. 2008; Naji 2012; Rao & Hossain 2011) to demonstrate that despite the prevalence of this discourse among state and development actors and often parents and young people themselves, reinforced through international commitment to EFA, promises of social mobility or economic gain through schooling are rather ambiguous. As in many contexts, most inhabitants of Medina Diallobé consider primary schools essential for socialisation and basic literacy and numeracy skills, yet value attributed to the only recently accessible secondary schools is more contested. Many parents and young people consider the promise of skills for formal employment within secondary

schooling as not worth the investment. For boys from more privileged families, “fallback” (Froerer 2011, p.704; Jeffrey et al. 2008, p.11) employment options in trade and migration appear more accessible, lucrative and high status. Such perceptions reflect widespread disruption in the state school system, and few male role models from the village who have become wealthy through schooling. For many girls, marriage entailing domestic work and economic dependence on a husband is seen as more certain, high status and comfortable than the vague possibility of gaining formal sector work.

To make sense of how local political economies influence people’s engagement with and evaluations of schooling – state or Qur’anic – I follow anthropologists who have drawn on Polyani’s concept of “embeddedness” (2001) to describe economic and social worlds as mutually constituted, as expressed by Olivier de Sardan (2005, p.61):

The classic economic phenomena (production, exchange, and consumption of wealth and services) [...] cannot be arbitrarily isolated from their social dimensions (for example, cleavages of age, gender, status, condition, class), their cultural and symbolic dimensions (norms of respectability, modes of social recognition, criteria of prestige, solidarity and achievement), their political dimensions (patron–client relationships and factions, neo-patrimonialism) or their magicoreligious dimensions (for example, accusations of witchcraft).

Indeed, understanding people’s rationales for engagement with schools in Senegal requires sensitivity to epistemology, but also local ‘economies’, or norms of reciprocity and duty, and interpersonal relations of affection. The “conflicting collective rationalities” circulating in such contexts therefore “mobilize various registers of social reality” and have to be considered simultaneously (ibid. 2005, p.61).

8.3 Knowledge, status and identity: Realising selves through learning

Further assumptions in development studies which this thesis aimed to address related to the role which identity plays in shaping people’s education preferences, experiences of school, and ability to realise their desired trajectories. The first assumption was that

state schools are empowering to girls while Islamic schools are not; the second that in a strongly Muslim context, parents will prefer Islamic rather than state schools for their daughters. The third assumption was that nuclear families are the principal decision-making unit and that, due to gender and age hierarchies, fathers will have far more influence than women and children. These assumptions are rooted in dominant ways of conceiving of families, gender and Islamic identity, widespread in economics but also in development studies. These assumptions helpfully acknowledge that identity and pursuit of status, not just economic benefits, play a role in shaping attitudes surrounding education. However, they fall into the trap of making value judgements about certain identities, and conceptualising dimensions of identity as monolithic, inherent qualities of individuals, rather than being context-specific, complex, multiple and intersecting. Identities are also constituted through constant negotiation by people in social interaction, who reproduce but also subvert and resist dominant framings.

The first important contribution this thesis makes to our understanding of how identity informs educational trajectories in northern Senegal is by drawing attention to the significance of social category hierarchies. Many ethnic groups in West Africa and the Sahel have for centuries been characterised by a distinction made between freeborn, artisanal and (former) slave lineages, which continues to have profound influence over people's sense of self and the educational opportunities available to them. The previous chapters detailing the complex influence of social category identities on educational decision-making contribute to wider anthropological scholarship on the way these constructions shape people's subjectivity and material existence in contemporary West Africa (Buggenhagen 2011; 2012; Jourde 2012; O'Neill 2012; Scheele 2012).

Since the 1990s, global spread of human rights ideologies and democratisation processes have created new spaces for former slave categories and artisans to challenge social hierarchies through 'confrontational' social movements (Hahonou 2011; Leservoisier 2003; 2005; Messaoud 2000; Ould Ahmed Salem 2009; Pelckmans 2011; Thioub et al. 2014; Tidjani-Alou 2000). However, we should remain aware of more subtle yet ongoing and everyday contestations. Indeed, tensions in Medina Diallobé are much less visible to an outsider than social movements, but demonstrate that struggles related to category identities are nonetheless salient in people's everyday experiences. Access to knowledge and education are key arenas in which people attempt to

reproduce or reconfigure social category identities. Evidence from Medina Diallobé therefore complements the findings of other studies, such as Humery's account of how *ñeeñbe* and *gallunkooɓe* in the Futa Tooro embraced Pulaar literacy programs for knowledge to revalorise their identity (2012). These examples also demonstrate that the enduring and persistent inequalities of social category hierarchies in West African and Sahelian societies are not statically inherited throughout history. Instead, individuals constantly renegotiate and creatively challenge the ideological basis of these identity constructions, and the relationships between different categories to social status and political power.

These insights suggest that scholars and practitioners of international development working in West Africa and the Sahel need a much greater awareness of social category hierarchies. While researchers interested in human rights may engage with anthropological literature on contemporary emancipation movements of slaves and former slaves, there is less awareness among scholars working in other fields, including education, that social category is a broad and all-encompassing axis of difference – as important as gender – relevant to all development processes and endeavours. Indeed, the emphasis on gender as the defining aspect of identity which shapes social relations, combined with the methodological predominance of quantitative studies based on predetermined variables, means that other equally important axes of social difference are ignored in much international development research.

A thorough understanding of the local cultural context is essential for comprehending how the identity of being educated has coincided with other identity constructions. Much rigorous qualitative scholarship on the intersections between social category, knowledge and power has been undertaken by historians and anthropologists of the Sahel. However, if they consider the impacts of social category on issues of contemporary development interest, they tend to publish in anthropology rather than international development, economics or comparative education journals. This tendency has been noted for qualitative and ethnographic analysis of culture and identity in the field of comparative education more broadly (Masemann 2005, p.113). Nevertheless, such research needs to be made more accessible to development practitioners and theorists working in or on West Africa, in order to illuminate the impacts social

category identities have on educational preference and achievement, including associated barriers to social justice.

The educational trajectories of young people in contemporary Medina Diallobé also demonstrate the multiple ways in which they realise their Muslim identities. Islamic societies around the world have experienced processes of modernisation, namely urbanisation, expansion of non-religious education and scientific discourse, decline of family and village social hierarchies, and greater mobility and access to information. Rather than following the secularisation thesis' assumption that all societies will demonstrate greater rationalisation and secularisation when undergoing modernisation, anthropologists have argued that modernities are multiple, not singular (Eisenstadt 2000). Indeed, constructions of 'modernity' are produced by people everywhere, entailing an ambivalent relation with 'tradition' and an orientation towards 'progress' in the present and future (Ferguson 1999; Osella & Osella 2006; 2007; Soares & Osella 2010, pp.3–5). In investigating people's strivings to be Muslim and 'modern', much research has revealed the popularity of rationalised forms of Islam, piety movements, and creation or harnessing of educational practices which combine Islamic knowledge with European school models by the middle-classes. However, these preference trends are not played out in Medina Diallobé, thus defying simplistic predictions about the apparently deterministic influence Islamic identity exerts over people's behaviour (Marsden & Retsikas 2013, pp.6–7), including education preference.

Indeed, in Medina Diallobé, focusing only on those middle-class people attending reformist private Islamic schools would mask the alternative everyday projects of self-making as practiced by the *sandas* or *ustaas'* *modernes* to articulate a 'modern' Islamic youth identity which combines customary modes of advanced Islamic education with elements of popular youth culture which they share with state school pupils. This can be compared with Masquelier's (2007) observations that marginalized young men in Niger are affirming Islam and being Muslim, but with less rigid attention to ritual and combined with hip-hop music and dress style. People's negotiations of their social category status also reveal negotiations of being 'modern' in contrast to 'tradition'. Some argue that social category hierarchies, including *toorodó* monopoly on political authority and customary barriers on certain occupations, belong to the realm of 'tradition' and have no place in contemporary society. Others, however, would

appropriate notions of being ‘modern’ less to dissolve social category difference, but to reconfigure social category characteristics in order to access new economic opportunities, which for the *toorobe* serves to maintain their social superiority.

Furthermore, Salafi-inspired ideology with its idea of affiliation towards a global, universalised imagined Islamic community, appeals to some. This orientation is especially attractive to those wishing to challenge the particularism of local ideologies subscribed to by the majority of Haalpulaar clerics, who construct differences in religiosity between social categories. However, young men of middle-class *seerembe* and *sharif* lineages in Medina Diallobé are less likely to be attracted to disenchanted forms of Islam, and instead pursue Qur’anic memorisation within the Tijaniyya Sufi network of Quranic schools, combined with informal acquisition of French literacy. They aspire to international travel and overseas economic opportunities to enhance and reconfigure their social role and religious authority as Islamic scholars, and specialists in the prayer economy, embedded within a mystic Islamic paradigm. This adds further weight to observations that contemporary articulations of Islam are not limited to pre-occupations with Islamist political agendas or middle-class piety (Howell & van Bruinessen 2007; Retsikas 2013), or that young Muslims and Qur’anic schools are associated with radical and militant Islam (Bano 2012b, pp.45–46; Bayat & Herrera 2010).

They add to a growing body of evidence that, contrary to stereotypes of its association with ‘backward’ illiterate rural populations, Sufism is a highly adaptive Islamic orientation whose proponents engage with ideas of modernity (Seeseman 2011). It is increasingly associated with affluent and middle-classes including in urban settings (Haenni & Voix 2007; Howell 2007), linked by transnational networks (Damrel 2006; Villalón 2007; Werbner 2007). Findings from Medina Diallobé address the call from anthropologists that more attention needs to be paid to the dynamic resurgence of Sufi or esoteric forms of Islamic learning and practice, and the intellectual challenges “a re-invigorated, deeply reflective, and highly literate and globalised Sufism presents” (Marsden & Retsikas 2013, p.22) – including surrounding definitions of ‘quality Islamic education’ which challenge strict rationalism and rejection of esoteric knowledge. These insights also provide an illuminating counter-balance to most scholarship on contemporary Islam in Senegal which has tended to focus on the experiences of the

Muridiyya⁴⁴, and more recently Niassiyya Sufi orders and reformist associations, to the neglect of the Haalpulaar contexts of the Futa Tooro and Medina Gounass predominantly affiliated to the Umariyya Tijaniyya (c.f. Humery 2012; Jourde 2012; O'Neill 2012; Smith 2008).

In addition, while there are occasionally clashes between people of different ideological stances, these should not eclipse the fact that most ordinary people draw upon a range of resources in their everyday lives (Lambek 1993; Otayek & Soares 2007), as evidenced by their seeking and consuming various forms of Islamic knowledge from different and even opposing theological viewpoints simultaneously. These examples add further weight to anthropological arguments about the dangers of using descriptive labels such as 'Sufi' or 'Salafi', 'Wahhabi' and 'reformist' uncritically or assuming their separateness (Jourde 2009; Otayek & Soares 2007, pp.2–7; Weismann 2007). In West Africa, from at least the 1990s there has been co-existence across doctrinal divides with fewer distinctions between supporters (Kane & Villalón 1998; Kobo 2012; Launay 2007; Masquelier 2001). Schools cannot be neatly categorised under any of these terms as there has been so much sharing of pedagogical techniques over time (Loimeier 2002; Ware 2014). In Medina Diallobé, people's educational trajectories expose a similar trend.

People's trajectories also reveal the complex, unpredictable and fluctuating ways in which gender, social category, socioeconomic status and being Muslim intersect to shape people's subjectivities and education preferences. They are influenced by the cultures and decision-making histories of individual families, in a myriad of permutations which can easily shift over generations. For instance, in the Futa Tooro from the colonial period boys from aristocratic political *toorodo* families have been especially likely to succeed through schooling and formal employment given their families' inherited privilege. However, in Medina Diallobé today it is these boys who are likely to abandon state school for Qur'anic school education or work in trades and migration. Similarly, the ideals *toorodo* parents have to marry their daughters for the status and economic security it confers leads in some cases to girls dropping out of secondary school before gaining diplomas, but in other more middle-class families it

⁴⁴ See Triaud (2000, p.10) for a critique of Murid-centrism in scholarship on Senegalese Sufism.

contributes to their finishing school and even obtaining high status university education. This reinforces the point that attention to context-specific detail is needed to understand education preference trends.

Finally, these different strands of theoretical insight combine to shed light on broader anthropological debates surrounding the everyday salience of Islam in Muslim people's subjectivities, and its implications for education. Although I argue for the necessity of making the importance of amassing *baraka* known to development actors, I am aware of the risks posed in privileging religion as the principal foundation for Muslim identity and practice (Abu-Lughod 1989, pp.295–297; Grillo 2004, pp.863–864; Soares & Osella 2010, p.2). Such scholars argue rather that religion is but one factor motivating people's behaviour, which is at times significant but at others less important. The popularity of participating in piety movements, veiling, fasting, or attending Islamic schools needs to be contextualised, and balanced by considering contrasting factors which lead people to reconsider, or lose interest in, religious commitments and orientations (Marsden 2005; Schielke 2009; 2010).

Marsden and Retsikas (2013, p.2) use the term *systematicity* to describe the process of people making 'Islam' or 'being Muslim' more or less salient in particular times and places. They define it as "the efforts required and undertaken by [...] people of Muslim background [...] in order to evince and eclipse 'the religious' as being a more or less central dimension of their lives." The ways in which *toorobe*, especially *seerembe* and *sharif*, present themselves as pious Muslims including through choosing Qur'anic school education for their sons to legitimise their social superiority, is an example of producing systematicity which needs to be situated in the social, economic and political context of the Futa Tooro and Medina Diallobé. In the current situation of economic insecurity within Senegal, and an international context which limits possibilities for migrants, even this deep-rooted commitment to Qur'anic school among *toorobe* is being challenged. Choosing the Qur'anic school now entails greater challenges in reconciliation of intrinsic, material and economic value, demonstrating that different aspects of *toorodo* selfhood are increasingly standing in conflict with one another (see also Marsden 2005; Schielke 2009; 2010). In contrast, *waylube* men are no less Muslim than their *toorobe* neighbours, but rather than articulating a pious Muslim identity through Qur'anic school, they pursue state schooling and formal employment to

valorise their social category status while studying religion informally. These nuances also provide a response to calls that greater attention be paid to the diversity of Muslim masculinities, as focus on ‘gender and Islam’ has tended to concentrate on women (Soares & Osella 2010, p.7).

8.4 Conclusion: Social justice in the age of Education For All

This thesis uses frameworks developed within anthropology of education to illuminate the locally-ascribed and “culturally produced” (Willis 1981) value people in northern Senegal confer on education. In particular, it considers engagement with faith-based schools rooted in a different epistemology to state schools, in the context of profound changes in education provision in the last fifteen years due to EFA policies. In the spirit of transformative applied anthropological research, I use these empirical insights to expose challenges to both distributive and curricular justice in education, and propose practical solutions to promote social justice in Senegal and similar contexts.

In Medina Diallobé, distributive justice, namely equal access to existing schools and their benefits, is hampered by the fact that the promises of secondary state school for self-realisation and social mobility are rarely delivered. This is due to structural inequalities linked to wealth, access to information, and constructions of gender. This observation reinforces mounting evidence that mass schooling is a “contradictory resource” (Levinson & Holland 1996, p.1), creating new forms of inequality in access and outcomes as much as creating opportunities. First, diplomas alone are insufficient for gaining formal employment, as young people also require information, contacts and assets mediated predominately by their family and its network. Their differential positioning in relation to these goods reflects deep-seated social and economic inequalities, which can be reflected in clientelist relationships between more powerful and affluent families and their dependents. The case of one politician appointing *vacataire* teachers in return for political support is a particularly strong example of how patronage logic counters assumptions of the meritocratic benefits accorded by schooling. These examples also contribute to debates surrounding the influence of clientelist relations on education outcomes and social mobility (Morgan et al. 2010),

concluding that while they help client families in the short term, they support unequal power relations and patrons' privilege in the long run.

Second, the trajectories of young women provide evidence to counter the discourse prevalent in international development policy that schooling and higher education lead to female 'empowerment' in the form of formal employment and decision-making authority. Within Human Capital Theory, mass schooling is promoted for girls for economic ends – whether supporting the wider economy through reproductive activities, or through their own productivity. In addition, many Western feminists assert that state schools should encourage more egalitarian gender identities, by providing girls access to valuable knowledge and income generating opportunities, and hence respect and authority in their families and communities. However, locally-situated processes of identity formation, whose intersections are complex, shifting, multiple and unpredictable, pose challenges to these simplistic predictions. Constructions of femininity centred on domesticity compete with secondary-school-based definitions of the “educated person” (Levinson & Holland 1996). Gendered constructions of social category can also restrict the income-generating opportunities of girls with school diplomas, or provide them little scope for negotiating when and to whom they get married. Contrary to assumptions in much literature on education decision-making that women and children occupy such a subordinate position within families that they have little agency in influencing decisions, girls do undoubtedly exercise agency over their educational trajectories. However, as girls are embedded in wider social networks encompassing parents, siblings, but also extended family and in-laws, in general most cannot easily counter these prevailing ideals.

In addition to these barriers of distributive justice, the findings from Medina Diallobé reveal widespread constraints to curricular justice, namely that the content of existing state school provision is inadequate for people's demands for religious knowledge and education. Indeed, despite lip service from international development organisations that religion is an integral aspect of people's well-being and hence of central development concern, parents' and students' faith-informed definitions of 'quality' education have little influence over public sector school delivery. The importance people place on moral education for the afterlife has been neglected in state education provision, especially the role of *baraka* in this process. The Senegalese government's recent

reforms integrate Islam into state schools according to models of ‘weak’ or ‘moderate’ faith-based schools, risking functionalising Islam in line with international donor agendas to achieve universal primary schooling rather than responding sufficiently to popular demands. These insights are crucial given the dearth of research on the impacts of, and reactions to, recent state engagement with Islamic schools in former colonies of the AOF in the past fifteen years to meet EFA (Villalón 2012; although see Villalón et al. 2012; Villalón & Bodian 2012; Villalón & Tidjani-Alou 2012 for exceptions).

Indeed, young people’s strategies to ‘do both’, which blur conceptual divides between formal and informal modes of education, show that the state is failing to deliver accessible and adapted education options which enable people to combine the Islamic and secular knowledge they consider valuable. Firstly, the state’s new Franco-Arab schools are available to only a small proportion of the Senegalese population, and its proposed “modernised *daaras*” have been slow to materialise at all. Furthermore, findings from Medina Diallobé raise questions about the possibility that the state’s new Islamic schools will address people’s demands, given that the Islamic knowledge these schools privilege is Arabic literacy and Islamic sciences, to which people grant low intrinsic, material or economic value compared to Qur’anic memorisation. Private Islamic school providers understand people’s desire to memorise the Qur’an before learning skills such as French literacy and build this into their schools’ functioning, but they are only accessible to the wealthy. Yet, the state’s Islamic school formats, conceptualised in the context of meeting donor commitments to EFA, continue to reflect rationalist biases in favour of text-based knowledge over embodied learning, and literacy over memorisation. This is sadly characteristic of dominant approaches to integrating ‘indigenous’ knowledge into existing school curricula; the knowledge is chosen and packaged according to the priorities and worldview of the often non-indigenous elite (Nakata 2007). The situation is also reminiscent of Deneulin and Bano’s observation that:

the cherry-picking mode of engagement between donors and religious communities [...] highlight[s] the limited effectiveness of current attempts at engaging with religion. They also bring to the fore the problems inherent in viewing religion only as a means to promote given ends, such as what donors conceive as valuable and desirable development outcomes (2009, p.25).

By investigating people's pursuit of religious education, this thesis challenges the simplistic assumption widespread in development studies that state schools are more useful or empowering, including for girls, than Islamic schools. Rather, contemporary preference for state schools among members of non-*toorodo* social categories, and parents for their daughters, has to be considered in the context of the exclusion of these groups from Islamic education as the most highly regarded form of knowledge. Indeed, before colonisation the identity of the educated person which accorded the highest status and most social influence in the Futa Tooro was associated with long-term memorisation of the Qur'an. Given the power it conferred, Qur'anic school was restricted to men of the elite Muslim clerical *toorodo* category, which in turn reinforced their social superiority. The fact that women and non-*toorodo* men travel to Qur'anic and Islamic schools outside the Futa Tooro demonstrates the unmet need for knowledge which carries significant intrinsic value for people's sense of well-being, and material benefit of social status.

In some aspects, tactics among young people in Medina Diallobé to learn religion outside of formal institutions destabilises *toorodo* men's monopoly over religious knowledge with progressive social implications. The transformative potential of increased support for, and informal provision of, women's Islamic education in Medina Diallobé needs to be considered in a balanced manner. Men's increased support for women's Islamic education is largely premised on its potential to maintain women's subordinate social position and appears to be contingent upon its compatibility with patriarchal social norms and male power. Indeed, the authority of the village's first female Qur'anic teacher owes much to her status as a *toorodo* from a prestigious *seerembe* family, and her emphasis on teaching pious female behaviour in line with patriarchal norms. In common with other recent scholarship on the growing trend of women's presence within positions of Islamic authority (Bano 2012a; Dessing 2012; Jeffery et al. 2012; Le Renard 2012), these examples show that the religious authority of female teachers challenges the social hierarchy subtly and slowly. However, this increased access nonetheless addresses women's unmet demand for religious knowledge to some extent, with positive benefits for their sense of self-worth, and potentially for their respect within their families and the wider community.

A comparable example of the transformative potential of access to Islamic education is with respect to the broadening of access to religious knowledge according to social category. *Non-toorobe* men are seeking Islamic education outside Medina Diallobé to challenge the monopoly *toorobe* clerics have over religious knowledge. It is true that for the moment *rimbe* other than *toorobe* have had more success at claiming Islamic authority with their Islamic education than *waylube* men. Indeed, the inclusion of non-*toorodo rimbe* but not *ñeeñbe* in *daaras* in the Futa Tooro has historical precedent, as religious authority in the hands of *ñeeñbe* is perceived by *toorodo* clerics as a more profound threat to the social order. Nonetheless, this access to religious knowledge does pose a challenge to the constraining constructions of gender, social category and being Muslim perpetuated by the *toorobe* and contributes to non-*toorobe* men's sense of spiritual well-being and self-esteem.

However, the fact that religious authority carries significant social influence, and current patterns of access to Islamic education underpin unequal relationships of power, has been neglected by the state and development associations who focus solely on the emancipatory potential of state schools not Islamic schools. Yet, in this context, exclusion of women from Islamic education can be considered a challenge to gender equality, as women are barred from the knowledge which confers the most social authority and the means to directly contest religious discourse. Similarly, social category is an equally important axis of inequality, despite being widely ignored by scholars of development and comparative education. Broadening access to religious knowledge and authority should therefore be considered a social justice issue and development priority of the same order of importance as access to secular knowledge.

The educational strategies of inhabitants of Medina Diallobé can be harnessed to find solutions in order to better address barriers to social justice. These solutions are both methodological and practical. First, for those individuals who aspire to attain the benefits of existing state schools, the findings of this thesis suggest an urgent need for more sensitive theoretical frameworks and methodological techniques to uncover the barriers to distributive justice. For instance, the widespread existence of clientelism challenges the narrow economic measures of household socioeconomic status, tied to the gendered ideal of a male breadwinner, as a way of making sense of inequalities in education outcomes between individuals. More research is needed into how people's

access to wealth in the form of inherited assets or access to well-paid professions is relational. In the case of parts of West Africa, these relationships reflect legacies of social category inequalities. Analyses of socioeconomic status and education outcomes therefore need to pay more attention to context and culture-specific relational dynamics than the access individuals or households have to specific assets.

Similarly, the findings of this thesis have implications for development measures which aim to increase access to secondary schooling for girls who are attracted to its promises of self-fulfilment. They need to acknowledge the ways that extended social networks beyond nuclear families and girls' covert forms of agency influence educational trajectories. Rather than trying to convince *parents* to permit girls to attend school, as is the current dominant policy focus, instead interventions need to recognise the role husbands and in-laws play in managing girls' schooling, domestic work and reproduction. In addition, although social category intersects with gender to shape girls' aspirations and trajectories, including posing barriers to distributive justice in terms of access to school-related social mobility, this is ignored by the state, development agents, and academics despite the investment currently made in challenging gender barriers in access to state schools. The need is therefore great for more qualitative research which can identify locally-specific forms of inequality better than methods which employ predefined categories of analysis.

Finally, addressing unequal access to desired forms of religious education should also be an urgent development priority. This thesis demonstrates that biases against strong faith-based schools are prevalent in Western educational theory. These biases are manifest practically in state education provision in Senegal – including recent reforms to the Islamic school sector to meet EFA - supported by Western development donors, and undermine many people's right to the religious knowledge that they value. Hence, people who attend state schools have limited access to religious-based social authority, and those who attend Qur'anic schools face challenges gaining desired economic skills. Sadly, current attempts by the Senegalese state and development organisations to integrate Islamic knowledge into existing state school systems, or impose "modernised" curricula on existing Qur'anic schools, raises problems surrounding what knowledge is valued, whose priorities dominate, and how to reconcile the multiple and competing educational demands evident among the population.

To practically address this problem, breaking down distinctions between formal and informal education can help us to imagine spaces for making state-provided education more compatible with the existing variety of additional (religious) educational opportunities. Students' creative solutions and means of navigating learning opportunities available to them, whether formal or informal, point to potential avenues through which education provision by the state can be improved to deliver social justice. Indeed, as applied anthropologists of education Levinson and Pollock (2011, p.4) argue, "many of us are deeply engaged in efforts to improve or transform schools, even as we question their efficacy or superiority as sites for learning". These efforts can be aided by "break[ing] down the barriers of theoretical orientation or educational practice that separate schools from other sites and modalities of learning". Furthermore, recent debates in development studies call for an approach of "going with the grain" (Booth 2011; Kelsall 2008) by building on existing norms of governance in African countries to elaborate appropriate solutions to social problems. In Senegal one needs to note the importance of a "religious mode of governance" (Olivier de Sardan 2011, p.28) in which charismatic leaders supported by religious legitimacy play a significant role in people's everyday lives, and that these leaders and associated religious bodies deliver collective services.

Hence, lessons learned from people's creative strategies of "multiskilling" (Froerer & Portisch 2012, p.339), by acquiring different forms of knowledge to maximise their future prospects, suggest the need for the state to engage with more innovative and alternative modes of non-formal education provision. These need not be limited to the model of the state school, and should work with the strengths of Qur'anic schools and in collaboration with their providers, without controlling them or imposing an alien epistemological logic. It makes pragmatic sense to work more collaboratively with these actors and their existing practices of service provision to address locally-defined development needs. The strategies of young people in Medina Diallobé point to possible extra-school educational responses adapted to the current functioning of the Qur'anic schools which the state, policy-makers and practitioners could consider. These include finding ways to accommodate non-formal numeracy and French literacy teaching alongside the timetables of existing Qur'anic schools for *almudbe*, or for adults who have completed *daara* education. This would be easier and potentially cheaper than

investing in ambitious “modernised” Islamic schools which aim at a seemingly impossible reconciliation between the Qur’anic schools’ epistemology, and the form and curriculum of schools informed by a secularist, rationalist framework demanded by donors.

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Glossary

addiya (Arabic): gift, especially given to Qur'an teachers, clerics, and Sufi shaykhs

adjami (Arabic): non-Arab; used here as African languages written in Arabic script

alluwal (Pulaar): wooden boards for Qur'an learning, from Arabic *alwah*

Almamy (French): from Pulaar *almaami*, from the Arabic *al-imam*, leader or guide

almudo (pl. *almudbe*) (Pulaar): Qur'anic school student

Amicale (French): association, e.g. of teachers, pupils, university students

année blanche (French): annulled academic year when no pupil moves on a grade

arabisant (French): arabophone

baraka (Arabic): blessing, grace, benediction, divinely derived power

bayda (Pulaar): young, beginning Qur'anic school student

baylo, pl. *wayluɓe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar smith category

batin (Arabic): hidden or concealed, esoteric knowledge

bid'a (Arabic): innovation considered unlawful within Islamic jurisprudence

ceddo, pl. *sebɓe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar warrior category

ceerno (pl. *seeremɓe*) (Pulaar): Qur'an teacher, cleric; plural denotes a clerical lineage

chef lieu (French): administrative headquarters, e.g. of a canton, department or region

collège (French): lower secondary school

communauté rurale (French): decentralised territorial demarcation at village level

cuballo, pl. *subalɓe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar fisherman category

daara (Wolof): Qur'anic school; from Arabic *dar al-Qur'an*, house of the Qur'an

dabaade (Pulaar): to practice the esoteric sciences

dabotoodo, pl. *dabotoobe* (Pulaar): practitioner of the esoteric sciences

diamantaire (French): diamond trader

dimo, pl. *rimɓe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar freeborn rank

du'a (Arabic): supplication, invocation, call on God

dudal, pl. *dude* (Pulaar): hearth, Qur'anic school, referring to study around a fire

duusde (Pulaar): to show a guest out

fedde (Pulaar): age set

fiqh (Arabic): Islamic law as a discipline in the curriculum of Islamic study

gallunkoodo, (pl. *gallunkoobe*) (Pulaar): liberated slave, descendant of former slaves

gawlo, pl. *awluɓe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar praise-singer/genealogist

category

hafiz (Arabic): keeper or guardian; someone who has memorised the Qur'an
hajj (Arabic): pilgrimage to Mecca; fifth pillar of the Islamic faith
hijra (Arabic): emigration in the face of conflict or persecution
ibado (Wolof): Salafi-inspired Muslim, from Senegalese association *Jama'at 'Ibad ar-*

Rahman

internat (French): boarding school, especially Qur'anic/Islamic boarding school
ijaza (Arabic): authorisation to teach within Islam
jaawando, pl. *jaawanbe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar courtier category
jeeri (Pulaar): less fertile land beyond the floodplain of the Senegal River basin
jihad (Arabic): war or struggle against non-Muslims
jinn (Arabic): intelligent non-human spirit in Arabian and Muslim mythology
khalifa (Arabic): successor to the Prophet; representative of a Sufi order
kordo, pl. *horbe* (Pulaar): bondswoman, female domestic slave
korité (Pulaar): celebration of Eid al-Adha at the end of the fast of Ramadan
labbo, pl. *lawbe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar woodworker category
laïcité (French): French brand of secularism
lasarar (Pulaar): esoteric knowledge, from Arabic *al-asrar* meaning secret
luumo (Pulaar): market or fair
lycée (French): upper secondary school
maabo, pl. *maabube* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar weaver category
maccudo, pl. *maccube* (Pulaar): bondsman, male domestic slave
marabout (French): Muslim religious leader or notable, from Arabic *murabit*
médersa (French): French colonial Islamic school, from Arabic *madrassa*
mbaaral (Pulaar): public event to celebrate completion of Qur'anic memorisation
mystique (French): esoteric sciences
naalanke, pl. *naalankoobe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar musician category
needi (Pulaar): behaviour, moral upbringing, manners
ñeeño, pl. *ñeeñbe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar artisan rank
njatigi (Pulaar): host, host family
pullo, pl. *fulbe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar cattle-herding category
sadaqa (Arabic): voluntary or expiatory alms, especially given to Qur'anic students
sakko, pl. *sakkeebe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar leatherworker category
sanda (Pulaar): older, adolescent or adult Qur'anic school/Islamic sciences student
sharia (Arabic): Islamic canonical law based on the Qur'an, hadith and *Sunnah*

sharif (Pulaar): descendant of the Prophet or his Companions

shaykh (Arabic): honorific title for a male leader, elder or noble; French version *cheikh* is a common male first name in Senegal

shirk (Arabic): sin in Islamic law of practising idolatry or polytheism

soirée (French): evening party usually with music and/or performances

soutoura (Wolof): discretion; maintenance of privacy, dignity and respect

Sunnah (Arabic): normative example, especially of the Prophet

surat (Arabic): verse of the Qur'an

surveillant (French): someone who exercises surveillance, e.g. in a school

table-bancs (French): combined desks and tables used in classrooms

talibé (Wolof): Qur'an learner, disciple of a religious leader, from Arabic *taalib*

talkuru, pl. *talki* (Pulaar): charm against bad luck, often containing Qur'anic verses

tafsir (Arabic): Qur'anic exegesis or interpretation

taqlid (Arabic): learning through imitation within the classical Islamic education system

tariqa (Arabic): path, way, method, technical term for a Sufi order

toorodo, pl. *toorobe* (Pulaar): member of the Haalpulaar Muslim clerical category

ustaas (Wolof): Arabic teacher in the Senegalese school system, from Arabic *ustadh*

vacataire (French): contract teacher in Senegalese secondary school

volontaire (French): contract teacher in Senegalese primary school

waalo (Pulaar): floodplain in the middle valley of the Senegal River basin

ziara (Pulaar): event in celebration of a Muslim saint living or dead

List of acronyms

ANSD	<i>Association Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie</i>
AOF	<i>Afrique Occidentale Française</i>
ASA	Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth
BFEM	<i>Brevet de Fin d'Etudes Moyennes</i>
CCIEF	<i>Cadre de Coordination des Interventions sur l'Education des Filles</i>
CFEE	<i>Certificat de Fin d'Etudes Elementaires</i>
DGCID	<i>Direction Générale de la Coopération Nationale et du Développement</i>
EFA	Education For All
EGEF	<i>Etats Généraux de l'Education et de la Formation</i>
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FNAECS	<i>Fédération Nationale des Associations d'Ecoles Coraniques du Sénégal</i>
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IA	<i>Inspection Académique</i>
IDE	<i>Inspection Departementale de l'Education</i>
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JIR	<i>Jama'at 'Ibad ar-Rahman</i>
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEN	<i>Ministère de l'Education Nationale (Senegal)</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAQUET	<i>Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Equité et de la Transparence 2013-2025</i>
PDEF	<i>Programme Décennal de l'Education et de la Formation</i>
PDS	<i>Parti Démocratique Sénégalais</i>
SCOFI	<i>Scolarisation des Filles</i>
UCAD	Université Cheikh Anta Diop
UCW	Understanding Children's Work
UGOMD	<i>Union Générale des Originaires de Medina Diallobé</i>
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VDA	Village Development Association
WARC	West Africa Research Centre